IN A SHANTUNG GARDEN

LOUISE JORDAN MILN

35

Σ 4

IN A SHANTUNG GARDEN

IN A SHANTUNG GARDEN

BY

LOUISE JORDAN MILN

Author of
"Mr. and Mrs. Sen," "Mr. Wu," "The Feast of Lanterns," "The Green Goddess," etc.

NEW YORK
FREDERICK A. STOKES COMPANY
MCMXXIV

Copyright, 1924, by
FREDERICK A. STOKES COMPANY

All rights reserved

Published, July 24, 1924
Second Printing (before publication) July 23, 1924
Third Printing, Aug. 20, 1924
Fourth Printing, Sept. 15, 1924
Fifth Printing, Oct. 10, 1924
Sixth Printing, Dec. 16, 1924
Seventh Printing, April 23, 1925
Eighth Printing, July 15, 1925

Printed in the United States of America

Dear Doctor Julia Holmes Smith:

Years ago—a great many years ago, for I was scarcely sixteen—you made me write a paper for the "Chicago Woman's Club." That "paper" was my first book; and I feel sure that if I had not written it, I should have written none. So—in a sense that is precious to me—all my books have been an obedience to you. Will you accept this one? I wish it were better, worthier the friend to whom I offer it. But because I *wrote it,* you *will not scorn it. It is more than forty years since you gave me your friendship. What that friendship has been—its loyalty, and your unfailing help and kindness—is not for a printed page; but we know. For almost all those long years our homes have been half the circumference of the globe apart; but there have been few weeks in which our letters have not crossed the Atlantic or the Pacific; and never for a day has our friendship flagged. Can many women boast so much?*

In China, by the country waysides, on the edge of a field of grain, in a meadow of wild flowers, one often comes upon a little gray stone, put there in love and commemoration of some one who has died long ago. And on those stones always is cut, in the beautiful Chinese characters, just the dead one's name and below it the best and proudest fact that can be recorded of that "gone-on-one's" life. When my "memorial truth-stone" is put among the English wild flowers, in some

Dorset woodland, on it beneath my name will be cut,
"Doctor Julia Holmes Smith loved her."

LOUISE.

London. March 5, 1924.

"Who ordered that their longing's fire
Should be, as soon as kindled, cooled?
Who renders vain their deep desire?
A God, a God their severance ruled!
And bade betwixt their shores to be
The unplumb'd, salt, estranging sea."

IN A SHANTUNG GARDEN

IN A SHANTUNG GARDEN

CHAPTER I

IN mid-ocean Tom Drew suddenly thought of Yo Ki—not casually or fleetingly, but with a sudden hard impact of memory that was startling, almost a mental blow; and so vividly that it was almost vision. Tom was no visionary. This was a brand-new experience. He was as downright as he was upright; a boy still in much, in spite of twenty-eight seething American years. And he had—as yet—almost as little sentiment as he had "vision." He thought his own country the best on this—or, for that matter, any other—Earth, the only country fit for a Tom Drew to live in, the only fatherland not to be ashamed of, and he was darned sorry for all the nice chaps he'd met who had had the bad luck to be born on the wrong side of the Atlantic or north of the Lake of the Woods or south of Florida. He had met quite a number of such nice chaps—a few at Harvard, and in the War a great many more. If he had not met them, come to know some of them fairly well, he could not have believed that any throttled from birth by the disadvantage of other than American citizenship and ancestry could be such all-round decent fellows as some of them he'd found beyond question were.

Even so, Drew had formed no intimacies with them—it was not his way—he had his full share of prejudice

—and he had had no need to, for he had abundance of friends of his own sort and Tom Drew liked his own sort best. But he was always just—perhaps, on the whole, his most outstanding quality. To be entirely, scrupulously just was with him both a controlling, abiding instinct and an active, conscious determination: almost an occupation, altogether a principle. He had admired Wilfred Browne, Peter Berkley, Dick Towne—a lot of others; but he never had chummed with them. The "foreign fellows" at Harvard, even those in his own class, had remained foreigners and outsiders to Tom from his first freshman day to the last moment of his senior year. That they had, was his doing far more than theirs. He had not much noticed the non-Americans in his class. In the War he had had to notice them. When you go "over the top" you are fairly busy with your own affairs, but you can't help knowing how the man close beside you does his own going over, how he faces hell-fire, how he dies—and the memory of it sticks. And in camp there are other significant things that you can't help rather more than noticing: how they bear up under mud and vermin, the mood in which they accept a lingering diet of bully-beef, or the lack of it. These and a dozen other personal human traits bite in and stay; they grip the mind's sensitive cuticle tighter than the best court-plaster grips the outer skin. But well as he had thought of many of his allies, good as he'd found them—and been quick to own that he had—Tom Drew had formed a lasting intimacy with none of them. And again the fault—if a fault—had been less theirs than his. A good few of them had won his liking and his respect. But, more than he had liked or respected them, he'd been downright sorry for them, pitied them

that they were not as he was, American. It was not their fault, of course—but it was their misfortune: just hard luck.

Tom was an American through and through and he meant to stay one. But there was nothing mawkish about his patriotism. It was scarcely a "burning" quality. It was hard and gritty; more a matter of course, a taking-for-granted, than a sentiment. He liked to see Old Glory tossing proudly in the worried winds of Europe; but it brought no lump to his throat. He didn't like the War, and he said so, but said it ungrumblingly, just as he had often made the same remark about the Gaelic wars—in their printed form—some years earlier. But he did his bit in France and Flanders, in the forest of the Argonne, sturdily and cheerfully, much as he had done his modest bit by "All Gaul is divided."

Tom was "mighty proud" of his country—far more than he consciously loved it. He had had but one consciously tender love in all his life as yet—his love for his mother. And for no one but his mother had he experienced even a twinge of sentiment, except an occasional such twinge for Nettie Walker. Tom Drew was not sentimental.

Odd that he should be thinking of Yo Ki of all people in the World now, and odder still that he couldn't throw the thought off! He had befriended Yo at Cambridge—he a Senior, Yo a Freshman—when Yo Ki had needed befriending pretty badly. But he never had taken any but a passing chivalrous interest in the Chinese boy, never had dreamed of making a friend of him, and had been bored by, almost resentful of, the yellow freshman's rather pathetic, lasting gratitude. He believed that he had not thought of the lad once

since the last day he'd seen him. Even when he had heard, with almost open disgust, his father's amazing announcement that he was to go to China for a year or two, Tom had thought several "damns," but it had recalled to him no thought of Yo Ki. But he was thinking of him now—thinking of him more persistently than he even once had done at Harvard. Who were the Kis anyway, he wondered. He'd never given it a thought at college; Chinese were just Chinese—and that massed them and ended it. Japs and Chinks had been all one to him at Harvard—and mighty little use he'd had for them—even considerably less than he'd had for English, French or Germans. Well, he himself was off to China now! Worse luck! Halfway over, an hour or two ago, a steward had told him. Funny if he ran across Ki when he got there. But it wasn't likely. Tom Drew's ideas and information of China were of the very haziest. But he did know that it was a big place. And he knew that he was going to a town with an utterly unpronounceable name in a part of China called Shantung—where the silks came from—as the nuts did from Brazil, in "Charlie's Aunt" —and he knew why he was going to Shantung, and what his father expected him to do when he got there. And he knew also a lot of international dust had been kicked up in Shantung, before the War and since. You couldn't help knowing that much, if you read the New York papers. Tom was no bookworm—except of books about butterflies—but he read the New York papers vigorously. He had no idea what part of China Ki had come from—never had cared to ask. Probably Ki had come from Hong Kong. Most Chinese lived in Hong Kong, Tom rather thought.

He hoped he'd not run across Yo Ki. He couldn't cut him exactly, if he did. And the very last thing he desired, and especially in China, was a Chinese acquaintance. Such an acquaintance would be both embarrassing and distasteful. He'd as soon be seen on the street with a black any day as with a Chink. Well, thank the Lord, it wasn't likely.

Nettie had promised to write now and then. He wondered if she'd do it. Nice girl, Nett! No end cute —those big blue eyes of hers were worth looking into any time, and the way her black hair grew, like a dull cloud of floss, sort of scalloped on her extra-white brow, was awfully pretty; and Nett knew how to fix her hair, if ever a girl did. And most girls did, Tom had noticed. He hoped Nettie'd write, but he hoped she wouldn't write too often, for there was not much he hated more than having to answer letters. And you *had* to answer a girl's letters—unless she was your sister. Probably Nettie wouldn't write often though. She wasn't that kind, and she'd be too busy having a good time in New York and at Newport and Martha's Vineyard, and in the mountains. Golly! he wished the Governor hadn't got that Shantung bee in his precious old bonnet. He didn't mind hard work. Such a fortune as theirs needed looking after all the time, and then some. And Tom was no shirker. But China! Of all the jump-off places on this old planet, China!

He was going to China because his father'd said so. People usually did what Powers Drew told them to; and his children always did, even Molly. And Mrs. Drew herself took her own way obliquely; a cringing indirection that few American wives ever need to employ.

Probably Nettie Walker would be married by the time he got back from China. Not much "old maid" about Nettie.

Tom would have been greatly surprised had he known that he was crossing the Pacific Ocean because of Nettie Walker. But he was. Powers Drew disliked a great many people, but he disliked no one else as sourly as he did William Walker—and much as he respected and cherished money, he had no intention of allowing the only child of that particular millionaire to become his own daughter-in-law. He had seen what he had seen at Molly's last dance four months ago, and Tom had started for China then and there. But, frank autocrat as the elder Drew was, he took good care that Tom got no inkling of his disapproval of "Walker's girl"—to enhance her charms by opposition would be stupid and dangerous. In all his sixty-three years Powers Drew never had balked or flinched at danger. More than once he had courted it, but he was as little stupid as any man in New York City. He saw as clearly as Tom did that Miss Walker was devilishly pretty, and was bewitching into the bargain. And he had no belief that absence makes the heart grow fonder —at least not the male heart. So he was especially cordial to Miss Walker whenever he met her, but without delay lit a long, fat, very strong cigar, and as he smoked it slowly made up his mind where he'd send the boy—yes, he decided finally, China—far off—ought to be exciting—and just as well to have that Shantung matter well looked into on the spot by some one he could trust and depend on.

Funny, if he did meet Yo Ki in China, after all, Tom reflected wryly, as he struck a match; and then Yo Ki

passed from Drew's mind, and he did not give the Chinese boy another thought.

CHAPTER II

IN Tsi-nan Fu, Drew "shook down" amazingly well almost from the first—for except in the War (which had been seeing Hell, not Europe) he never had been out of his own country before, and as a rule the American man does not transplant—overseas—any too well; especially those American men who are not exceptional, but are true to type, cut to pattern. A Henry James, a Bret Harte may find home and satisfaction "abroad" but the Simon-pure American rarely does. The American diplomats who have been most welcome at the Court of St. James's, most cordially valued in London, most deeply and longest regretted when they have gone, to a man—one fancies—have been glad to go "back home." The tang of the West has called them. And the less lettered, more average American man almost always dislikes and is bored by long sojourns in foreign places. He's a loyal fellow, and likes best to be where chairs and customs and cooking are very much "like mother's."

Tom Drew found less adventure in Tsi-nan Fu than he had anticipated, and very much more comfort and usualness. Tsi-nan Fu did not seem to him particularly strange at first.

The capital's wide, clean streets, its cheerful orderliness seemed to him un-Chinese; its lake, its garden-like promenades, its wide-flung park seemed to him,

at first, more of the Twentieth Century than of the First, more of the West than of the East.

Perhaps so much of Shantung (and more of it than international and enforced treaties have stipulated) having been passed from hand to hand in the international shuffle of recent years has somewhat cosmopolitanized such Shantung cities as Tsi-nan *externally;* and Drew did not catch the strong undertow of intense Chinese feeling that today, as two thousand years ago, is the biggest, most significant, most permanent thing in Shantung—and in all China.

Tsi-nan Fu seemed to Drew a little like New York, and even more like Chicago. There was a staccato something about its rapid business bustle and jolt that reminded him of Chicago, rather amusingly. That was nonsense, of course; Tsi-nan is a very little like Boston, a little like a highly colored English Cathedral town—Winchester, Canterbury, Chester, perhaps. Happy, prosperous, quiet, it is not like Chicago—though its streets are as well paved. There is teeming trade in Tsi-nan, but there are no manufactures, no wholesale trades, except what the Tsintao-Tsi-nan Railway inevitably has seeded in the old city that was prettier before the railway came—perhaps the prettiest city in northern China—and was happier then than now. Its beautiful two granite walls girdle Tsi-nan Fu, as Constantinople is girdled; it is fresh and cool with the plenteous water of its clear, bubbling wells, and it is abundantly water-fed and cleaned by the bounty of the brisk running Loh whose wholesome water is carried under the capital's streets in generous conduits. Tsi-nan Fu is still shadowed a little by Berlin—perhaps Tom caught that, without realizing it, and perhaps it was that that

made him think of Chicago. And Tsi-nan still is shadowed by Tokio—but that Tom Drew did not catch.

There were not many Americans in Tsi-nan when Tom arrived—or, if there were he did not run across them. But there was one, and she was "a whole city full," and she took him in hand at once and firmly, gave him buckwheat cakes for breakfast, told him what he might and might not do, and ordered him about, and saw to it that he obeyed her, with a gay, breezy directness equal to his sister Molly's.

Drew had been in Tsi-nan Fu exactly thirty-seven hours and a half, when he looked up at the composite sound of high heels and many tinkling silks, and saw a very pretty woman smiling at him from the doorway of the hotel drawing-room.

"How!" his visitor greeted him.

Drew sprang up and his puzzled face brightened at the Indian word; but he wondered desperately where he'd met her. You met so many girls in one place and another—but he ought not to have forgotten this one.

"You don't mean to say," she remarked reproachfully, as she came in and made herself comfortable in a wide wicker chair, "that you don't remember me?"

"Indeed, no! I remember you perfectly." Where the dickens *had* he met her? When?

The woman's blue eyes danced. "Well—you don't seem particularly glad to see me."

"But I am—particularly glad to see you; I'm no end glad." It was true.

"But you've forgotten my name?"

"Well"—Drew fenced—"just for the moment—I'm so surprised to meet you again *here*—that it's gone out of my head. I'm a fearful duffer at names; I always

was. I'll remember it in a minute''—he hoped to goodness he would—''if I don't try to remember it, you know.''

She nodded. ''But you *do* remember me, Mr. Drew?''

''Of course I do.'' Tom spoke warmly.

''But you didn't expect to see me again in China? Did you?''

''By George, no; that I didn't.''

''But don't you remember my telling you that I was going to be a missionary? You don't seem to remember me so *very* well! And we had such a nice long talk about it—that day at the picnic. Well—I got my own way with Poppa at last; and here I am. I'm in charge of the woman's branch of the Presbyterian American Missionary Society to Shantung.''

Drew shot her a look, and gave her attire a longer one. He was used to girls who dressed like that. Molly did—for one—and so, in a quieter way, did his mother. There wasn't a place in New York—or in Paris, he knew—that could turn out a woman better than this. And she did Tiffany credit—from the rings that blazed on her right hand—she still wore her left glove—to the butterfly at her throat; and that very small wrist watch had cost a very large number of dollars.

''No; you don't!'' he assured his unremembered friend. ''I've no doubt you got your own way with Poppa, and with a few others not of your own sex. But when you say that the missionary notion ever entered your head till this moment, you are telling me an untruth—and allow me to tell you so straight. You are no missionary.''

"I'm 'fraid," the lady said with a patient sigh, "you don't know much about missionaries—do you, Mr. Drew?"

"Never saw one in my life—to know it, thank the Lord!"

"That's not a kind thing to say to me, Mr. Drew," she told him sadly. "We are terribly misunderstood, we poor missionaries. You mean my clothes, I suppose. We have changed all that. It is part of our policy now—our duty—to look as nice as we can. It attracts the poor heathen—and helps us to lead them to better ways. We try to reach their poor souls through their eyes."

"Missionary salaries must have gone up!" Drew surmised.

"We are paid almost nothing," she assured him earnestly. "But we all dress as well as we possibly can. And Poppa has some money."

"So I supposed."

"Oh—well—have it your own way—just for this once. I'm not a missionary then—not what *you* mean by 'missionary'—not the usual sort. But I've come along here to do you a good turn, all the same."

"You have done me a very good turn," Drew told her heartily, "about the best turn any one ever did me in all my life."

"Do you remember my name, yet?"

Drew shook his head regretfully.

"And I have not forgotten yours for a single day since I first heard it. But you *do* remember me?"

"Indeed, I do! I couldn't forget *you!*"

"Good boy! Good Mr. Manners! Well—I suppose

I must forgive you, and help you out. Does Nellie Wilcox mean anything to you?"

"Of course!" Tom cried with a kindling face. "I remember it perfectly—now. What an ass I was!"

"I thought you'd remember it, as soon as I told you. But you *do* remember Nellie Wilcox now?"

"I most certainly do, Miss Wilcox."

"That's the man! Anything to oblige a lady, eh? You'll do! You have a good memory, Mr. Drew—better than mine. It's nice of you to remember Nellie Wilcox. I never heard the name in my life."

Tom tried to look as indignant as he felt. No one likes to be caught as she had caught him. And who the devil was she anyway? What did she want? He didn't believe he *had* met her before. Well, she should not have it all her way—not with him; he wasn't her poppa—if she had a poppa!

A rather sheepish laugh was the best outward show that he managed to muster of the indignation he felt. But he paid her back in her own glib coin—better late than not at all.

"I did not suppose you had. And this is our first meeting. I don't know who you are, but I had no more idea that your name was Wilcox than I had that my eyes ever saw you until they saw you standing in that door." He was taking chances. He half suspected he had just barely met her sometime, somewhere; for what other explanation could there be of her having dashed in on him like this—knowing his name, and all?

"All right," she admitted sunnily, "we'll start over—fair and square. We have not met before. But I am glad to have met you now, Mr. Drew. I am not Miss Wilcox—or, incidentally, Miss anything."

"I am pained to hear it."

The woman gave him a nod of mock thanks. "But I am the American colony. At least I am the most of it —the only live wire. The Consul is here sometimes, to be sure, from his 'shop' at the Treaty Port. But for one of us—us Americans—he's not much of a live wire. And he's always busy. He's specially busy now snipe shooting up the river. I look after all the stray Americans that he ought to look after—if I like them. That is my bit that I do for the League of Nations—being nice to my countrymen, and to Giggles' countrymen—if I like them. Giggles is a Britisher."

"Giggles doesn't sound English."

"Lord no, does it! But just you wait until you hear Giggles giggle! I—by the way—am Mrs. Giggles. But I am American through and through."

That at least Tom Drew did not doubt. No one could doubt it.

"We heard you were here. Giggles ought to have been the one to call, of course; but Giggles is an awful shirker—so I came in his place. I've brought you his card though—to see if I liked you—"

"Do you?" Drew interrupted.

"So-so," Mrs. Giggles laughed. "I want you to dine with us to-night. We'll just be four: me and you and Giggles and Walter Swift. Walter's an American too! So we'll be three to one."

"Three Americans to one Britisher; that's a bit unfair isn't it?"

"Oh, Giggles won't mind much. He likes Americans —or has to pretend to. We eat at eight, but you come any time after half past six you like—Walter Swift nearly always does—and it will give us time to get

nicely acquainted before dinner, you and the rest of us. It takes some time sometimes to get downright chummy with Giggles. Here's his card." She handed it over as she rose.

Drew read, "Lord Rutherford-Carmichael."

"Yes," she assured him, "that's us. I'm an English peeress, not in my own right—as they say over there—but in Giggles' right. Giggles is just a pet name. I can't call him 'Rutherford-Carmichael' every blessed time I speak to him, now, can I? Life's too short!"

"Why not have a shot at his first name, Lady Rutherford-Carmichael?"

"You haven't heard his first name," she returned with a pretty grimace. "It's a thousand times worse. And if I did—the other British aristocrats would think I didn't know what was what. Catch me letting them think that! We Americans have to hold our end up in the British peerage—and I tell you we do!"

"So I have heard it rumored."

"Calling your husband by his given name isn't done, in the peerage. I've shocked them enough over there without doing that. I had a perfectly awful time my first year over there—or rather the others did. I shocked them some. But we get on better now."

"Resigned—are they?"

"Exactly. And a trifle crushed. But there's a good deal to be got out of being an English peeress. I've enjoyed it on the whole. A 'ladyship' can do a good deal as she likes in England, if she goes about it in the right way, and in the Colonies or a place like this she can do even more as she likes. She has a lot of leeway in some directions; an American woman has a lot in others. I take both—as I've every right to do. I'm

rather fond of my English privileges, and I don't dislike Giggles—he wouldn't be half bad if he didn't giggle all the time—but I simply *can't* break him of that. But," and the laughing voice was suddenly grave, as she turned at the door and held out her hand, "what I am *proud* of, Mr. Drew, is being an American. I'm glad you've come. I'll look after you—Walter Swift and I will. We are going to be friends. I hope you'll be here some time. We've been here more than a year, and we're booked to stay at least as much longer. Giggles is up to something about a mine. There are no end of mines in Shantung. As soon after half past six as you like."

She had gone without a word of question as to whether he *would* dine with them that evening. She took his acceptance for granted.

Well, so did Drew. "What a corker!" he said to himself with a laugh. But he suspected that they *were* going to be friends—as she'd said. But he did not suspect how firm their friendship was to grow, how deep it would go, or what it was to encounter and survive. Tom Drew had not realized China yet.

He whistled contentedly as he dressed. He thought he was going to have a gay evening—he scarcely could fail to, if the man she'd called Walter Swift and the Englishman were half up to the mark Mrs. Giggles set.

But he made no mistake about her. Tom Drew knew a thoroughbred when he met one; and he knew the splendid granite qualities of loyalty and character that usually lay under the scintillating surface of such vibrant, self-sure American womanhood as that of young Lady Rutherford-Carmichael.

CHAPTER III

AND he did present himself and his dinner-jacket at Lady Rutherford-Carmichael's bungalow door, midway between half past six and eight.

His hostess received him gravely. "Home" seemed to dignify her. But her quieter mood did not surprise Drew. He was used to the changing moods and carriage of such women.

The luxurious drawing-room into which the Chinese "boy" showed him was not overcrowded with furniture —Drew had not expected that it would be. It was a beautiful room, beautifully fitted and kept, but it hadn't a frippery, not a photograph, and only one vase of roses.

A tall thin man, already with Lady Rutherford-Carmichael, rose at Drew's entrance. Tom knew this type, too—you see it in New York, even in Chicago and Sacramento—you see it oftenest in the South: a fine-cut face, eloquent eyes both pathetic and merry, beautiful, well-kept patrician hands, silvering dark hair, very soft, that waved a little, perfect ease, dignified, good-humored, a beautiful mouth, a strong chin, a magnificent forehead, a handsome not insignificant nose, a low-pitched clear voice, an intellectual face, an easy-soldierly figure, impeccably clad—a man of the World—Cosmopolitan, too—but to an American as unmistakably American as either their hostess or Tom Drew himself. Tom's anticipations of a very enjoyable evening were not dashed in the least, but he felt sure there'd be no "high-jinks" here to-night.

"Mr. Swift is our oldest resident," the woman told Drew when she had introduced them. "He's a fixture

now in China. He came for a week—ten years ago—or was it twelve?"

"Nearly sixteen," Swift replied.

"And he doesn't have to stay—as you and we do—not for an hour. He doesn't work. He just lives here and likes it. He loves China. He likes the Chinese—thinks they are interesting. Why, he does not even dislike the Japanese."

"I do not dislike them *all*," Mr. Swift corrected her courteously with a slow smile. His smile was particularly charming. Drew had known that it would be. Lee smiled so: a smile fine and rarer than beauty. Great physicians have it oftener than fighting men do, but they—the soldiers—do have it now and then, and *true* priests; and when a great soldier smiles so, it is an exquisite human kindling.

"I won't wish you so long a sojourn here as mine, Mr. Drew," the older man said, "but I hope you'll stay long enough to like it. China takes time, *needs* knowing. But the longer you stay the better you like both the place and the people—especially the people. But for that matter they are one—China and the Chinese—more peculiarly so than any other country and people, I think. You will find them thoroughly likable—if you stay long enough."

"A year or two, I expect"; but he did not add why he had come or what he was to do here, if he could. And neither asked him. But Tom looked towards the door with interest when the tone in which Lady Rutherford-Carmichael said, "Oh, there you are!" told him that the man who'd joined them was his host. For Tom, too, was here, as she'd said her husband was, on something or other to do with a mine. Indeed Drew

had been sent to do several things in connection with more than one mine—if he could—and some other things as well. Mr. Powers Drew of New York was not a narrow or narrowed financier.

The newcomer greeted him cordially, but Tom had all he could do not to laugh outright as they shook hands. This countrywoman of his surely out-Americaed all other American women. The man she had named Giggles, "because he giggled all the time"—so she said—"awake or asleep, at levees and at church," had the gravest face Tom Drew ever had seen: a smileless man, if ever Drew had seen one. And so the evening proved. The Englishman never smiled once. But in his grave, quiet way he was far from uncordial—he bore his full share of the talk, and the shrewd young American had little doubt that the quickest mind there—the master-mind of the four—was the mind of the host: the man who never smiled once, but answered readily—and as a matter of course with a not unaffectionate glint in his deep-set eyes to the wife's continued "Giggles" this and "Giggles" that.

The New Yorker was right—and wrong. The Englishman had the quickest mind there, but Walter Swift had the wisest and surest, made the fewest mistakes. And, come to know him well, it was he, the older American man, who of the four so casually together here—but destined to dig so deep into veriest China together—had the greatest share of that biggest, perhaps, of all gifts: indescribable, irresistible charm—more even than the woman so prettily hospitable, so delicately clad in shimmering crepe and pearls, so full of witchery and brimming kindness.

Little they dreamed it, but there was drama ahead

of them, not so very far ahead either. Indeed, Mr. Swift was always prepared for human drama in China. He had been there sixteen thoughtful years. Light-hearted, well-pursed, care-free, if ever four healthy, well-bred, contented people were, there was sharp, difficult drama and strain ahead of them. And Powers Drew's as-yet-untried son was to bear no minor share of its brunt, feel no small part of its strain and sting, and to show no small part of the courage that such tests find in many of us, and, too, of that address and nimbleness that such hard tests find only in the few. Tom Drew was to be tested, who had not had a worry since he was ten, or shed a tear since he was six, a rich man's much pampered son, pampered with a very dangerous sort of pampering and combination of creature-indulgences that makes cowards of many, makes soft and inconsequent all who are not born strong with inherited indomitability of sterling character and unflinching good-faith.

Mr. Swift, Drew noticed, addressed their host merely as Rutherford. A good idea too, Tom thought, if one knew the fellow well enough. Rutherford-Carmichael was rather too much of a mouthful for frequent use. What was the Christian name, he wondered, that the tripping-tongued wife would not use? Her Christian name was Aline, clearly enough, and Tom liked the way her husband pronounced it—and the look in the deep-set English eyes as they watched her. The husband and wife were thoroughly good friends. Drew liked that—it gave the welcome they gave him a comfortableness not unlike the comfortableness of a very good, deep easy-chair.

The New York man was really sorry when it would have been both indecent and ungrateful to stay any

longer. It had been a thoroughly good evening. He hoped he'd be asked again. It would not be his fault if he was not asked often.

Mr. Swift walked back to the hotel with Drew—it was on his way, he said—and indirectly it was. Their host went to the outer gate with them.

"I like your friend, Aline," he told his wife as he went back into the drawing-room.

"And that's a great relief to you, isn't it, Giggles dear?" She laughed up at him. "You don't always like them, do you?"

"I like you to like what you like," he told her with his hand on her hair.

Aline pulled herself up from her chair by his arm. "Do you know," she said with her hand on his shoulder, "you are rather a dear? I like you, Lord Rutherford-Carmichael. Yes, he *is* a nice, a very nice boy,"—Drew was years her senior, but the maternal instinct is not measured by weeks and months—"and he's a long way from home. It's a far cry from Fifth Avenue to the grave of Confucius"—there was a shadow of sigh in her voice "—but we'll look after him. I'll give him a good time—see if I don't—and you and Walter are to see that he doesn't make any of the mistakes so many do over here. He's got a mother in New York, and I bet you she's a dear!"

The man nodded. "Right! We'll look after your new cub, old lady—Walter and I; and I have no fear that you'll not give him a fairly good time."

They asked him to dine, to tiffin very often, to such small functions as Aline could patch out of Tsi-nan Fu's limited European personnel—and *en famille*. And the

"nice boy" from New York found it particularly easy to shake down in Tsi-nan very contentedly indeed.

CHAPTER IV

BUT when Drew left Tsi-nan Fu, and went to live in the chummery, not many miles from K'üfu, but as many more from another house of European or American habitation, he did not shake down either so quickly or so comfortably. He did not care for it at all.

And he discovered that, although, thanks to the extraordinarily clever teacher Swift had found for him and the long hours of downright hard work that yellow Thing Fong had contrived to force him to put in, he had learned a really astonishing amount of Chinese—the language—he had learned little, if anything, of China or of the Chinese. And, although he had spent the larger half of a year in one of the oldest and most intensely Chinese cities in China, he began to suspect that in Tsi-nan Fu he had not been in China at all. Perhaps he had spent too much of those seven months in Aline Rutherford-Carmichael's drawing-room and on her verandahs. He had learned a great deal from his friendly countrywoman—about England and any number of other things—and she certainly had given him a particularly good time; but she had taught him nothing about China, unless a little how to "get on" with native servants and shop-keepers, which Tom probably would have picked up for himself without much difficulty, for he was not without a good deal of shrewd, good-natured knack. It was partly the intolerable heat (though why

intolerable to a summer-seasoned New Yorker, would be difficult to say) of Tsi-nan in mid-summer that drove Drew out into the leafier country, partly Walter Swift's prompting, and partly his own feeling that he ought to be moving on—getting a bit more done. And when he realized, as he did almost at once in the country, that he had dug down into China scarcely at all, or, for that matter, not even scratched the surface of that incredible, baffling place, he instantly determined to "stick it" out here in the bachelors' chummery. His father had told him to take his time, to go slow and sure, and "draw on me for what you want. I know what you ought and ought not to spend in U. S. A., but I'm not the particular brand of futile fool that would think he could tell better, here in Wall Street, what money you reasonably needed in Shantung than you could in Shantung. I know you'll go steady, you've never pranced or scattered more than I like a son of mine to. Draw on me for what you think right; I shan't squeal. And I guess you've got too much sense to squander money that'll be yours—most of it—when you've got me potted under a ten thousand dollar monument out in that lot of ours in Brooklyn. You pretty well know what we've got. Dip in what you think right. I guess you won't break me if your mother and Molly have never quite managed to do it. But, I'll give them their due, they've had a darned good try. By the way, you take your nets and all the rest of your butterfly and bug foolery along with you. Bill Jenkins tells me there're no end of butterflies over there in China. You can let out that's what you're prowling around for; it'll be as good a dodge as you could have to lie low behind. If any one had ever told me a boy of mine 'ud go daft over butterflies and caterpillars and

such ornery foolishness, I'd have said a lot back; and I guess your grandfather 'ud burst a blood vessel. But I suppose it's as harmless a way of wasting time as any, and it certainly don't cost much. It'll come in handy over there in China while you're nosing about. Work it for all it's worth, Tom. Take your time. Get inside of things thoroughly—and when you've got it sized up as well as ever you can, write and tell me the lay of the land over there as you see it. Enjoy yourself all you can, too. That never hurt a sensible man or his work yet, and I guess it never will—not a Drew anyhow. Enjoy yourself all you can, and anyway you like—so long as you don't get mixed up with any of the Chinese ladies; a Chink daughter-in-law wouldn't suit me any too well, and I guess it 'ud suit your mother considerably less."

Tom had grinned. It wouldn't suit him either. He had the soundest American views on the "color question."

Tom had every intention of going steady, and he intended to give his father a perfectly square deal. It was only fair, for his father had given him one, if ever a father did. Most American fathers do. And neither the husband nor wife had made the great mistake that so many American parents, especially the wealthy, so pathetically make: they had not spoiled their boy. They had indulged him, but not over-indulged, or weakly or blindly.

If Tom had realized in Tsi-nan Fu that he was learning just about nothing of the Chinese—their personal traits, their mentality, their individualities—he would have left Tsi-nan sooner. For that was the basic foundation of what his father had sent him to Shantung

to do, and had explicitly charged him to do; to get to know and understand the Chinese.

But Tsi-nan Fu after the first few weeks, no longer reminded Drew of anything or place in the West. The streets with their teeming yellow multitudes and their constant donkey traffic reached him, told him that he was indeed in another world. Deep, dark, impenetrable eyes, inscrutable yellow faces—so many of them parchment-like; voices that rose and fell in odd, uncanny cadences that he came to realize were even more a race's vocabulary than were the mere words that rose and fell with them; gestures that meant just what they did *not* mean in the West (a nod of the head for "no," a shake of the head for "yes"); the pushing, absorbed, dense, mannerly human throngs; the mingling of embroidered costly silks, and coarse blue and black alpaca garments, prosaic, commonplace things brooded over by mystery as dense, impenetrable and stupendous as it was unmistakable; an indescribable blend of exquisite perfume and of close-packed human odor that was not a stench, things exposed and marketed—evidently valued too—that Drew had never seen exposed before, or had suspected were marketable anywhere on earth; an endless yellow throng that took no notice of him—Drew doubted if they saw him:—all this and a thousand else showed Tsi-nan Fu China of China, stamped it a Chinese city of the Chinese people as the deep-cut "chop" of one of its merchant-princes stamped his contract as undeniably good.

He could not read the symbols; but he had too able a mind not to realize that they were significant, and that much that seemed to him bizarre, garish, fantastic, absurd, was woof and warp of a mighty and wonderful

people's sinew and soul; the key in which half Earth's human lives were set.

The inn at which he lived (the little he was not at the bungalow Giggles) was Bonifaced, as the majority of inns in Northern China are, by a very wide-awake and thrifty Mussulman, who knew how to screen well his native clientèle from his occasional Western guests, and who must have had instinct and genius for making alien and not understood clients surprisingly comfortable. But out of his own rooms, the place was a North China Inn; it smelt of ginger and of spices he could not name. Drew caught polyglot babble now and then, heard one-string fiddles tweaked in the night, and paper drums thumped, heard the door cat yowl on its chain—and it did not remind him of any hotel in New York or Chicago.

Tsi-nan Fu no longer reminded Tom Drew of anything but China!

No one in Tsi-nan Fu had known why young Drew was in Shantung, or that he was there for any purpose even remotely connected with that great and universal industry called money making; and no one had had any suspicion of it—unless Swift had: Walter Swift whose fine-trained intelligence was so acute and alert that it had become almost a fine and unusual psychic gift. Swift knew the stamp of Americans from whom Drew had sprung. He knew that Powers Drew still kept a firm and active and tireless hand on the controlling throttle of all his enormous financial interests, and Swift did not believe for a moment that the astute millionaire's only son had been sent—or allowed to go—to Shantung at the industrially useful age of twenty-eight to dawdle about. He had urged the teacher of Chinese on Drew,

and had tried to interest Tom in things Chinese that mattered and were vital, a little because China had become to him almost an obsession—an intellectual one, not a fad—the interest of which he would have liked to share with a younger countryman whom he cordially liked, and whose mind he saw was quick if not scholarly. But it was much more because he sensed that whatever Tom had been sent across seas to do would be materially and essentially helped by a good working knowledge of China and the Chinese people, that he had tried to pass on to him some of his own interest in that dual, very intricate subject, had urged him to employ the tutelage of Thing Fong, and finally, seeing how Drew was drifting in Tsi-nan Fu, chiefly at the Rutherford-Carmichaels' bungalow, had suggested the chummery in a more exclusively Chinese part of the sacred province.

The good-natured young matron who had frankly adopted "the nice New York boy" believed that it was she who held Tom lingering on in Shantung. It had happened before and in more places than China. And the peeress Aline saw no earthly reason why it shouldn't. She never had done any man a hurt yet, and never would; and the man hadn't been born that could hurt her, or get near enough to, unless Giggles hurt her—which was absurd. Had she suspected, as Walter Swift did, that Tom had serious business in China—American-*Chinese* business—she would have put her capable shoulder to that wheel with downright good will and to no mean avail. There *are* platonic friendships between men and women—often—even between those young and attractive; a splendid and beautiful chumship without blemish or danger. And, for all that he lingered on so long in Tsi-nan and about half lived in the Rutherford-

Carmichael bungalow, Tom Drew was no more in love with her, or in danger of growing so, than she was with him.

Good time as he had in Tsi-nan Fu, in one thing Tom had been disappointed: he rarely got a game of Mah-Jong; and when he did he soon discovered that, whatever he was in New York, in China he was no crack player of Mah-Jong. Indeed he had to unlearn much of the game, as he knew it, before he could learn Mah-Jong as it was played in China.

"Is it a Chinese game at all, the Mah-Jong we play at home?" he appealed to Walter Swift.

"As Chinese as a good many other 'Chinese' curios and foods that one pays through the nose for in the highly civilized West; inferior, hybrid. In England they play the game a trifle—mind you, I say a *trifle*—closer to the Chinese rules. You in America get a little nearer to the incredible swiftness of the Chinese play; but great Scott, how you butcher the beautiful, ancient game—the best of you! You have changed the rules and the terminology too. There's not much resemblance between clubs and spades on thin pasteboard and Winds and Dragons on ivory tiles; but for all that, you've got more than a dash of draw poker into your Mah-Jong. We are a wonderful people, Drew. But even the English who are mad—there's no other word for it—frenzied over Mah-Jong in Pekin, don't half play it—they play at it. And as for you American Mah-Jongers, you have cut parts of it out—lovely parts of it,—and put all sorts of fooleries in. Watch Giggles and St. John at the Club—they come as near giving a respectable game as any Europeans I've ever seen try to—watch them, and you'll learn to play all right over

here—*with Europeans;* but take my advice, and don't hope to play Chinese games with Chinese players. We can't pull it off. I rather fancied myself at chess before I came to China. I have yet to play chess with a Chinese that couldn't beat me without half trying; and I've had several games with boys of ten and twelve."

"Did Mah-Jong originate in China?" Drew persisted. "I've heard not."

"It originated here all right. A lot of things have; moving pictures did—for one thing—five thousand years before the Christian era. As for your pet game—and most of the others—every naked coolie in the paddy fields, every *lowdah* on a canal house-boat, has forgotten more about Mah-Jong than you will ever learn."

Tom did not believe it—but he came to before he left China.

Lord "Giggles"—to avail ourselves of his wife's short-cut—took very little interest at first in young Drew except as a man Aline liked and liked to "play about with." Her husband was glad that she did. He had business in Shantung; rather important, and often absorbing, business—and he knew his wife almost as well as he loved her.

Had he been in the American's confidence, Rutherford-Carmichael would have made himself peculiarly useful to Tom—along the lines of Powers Drew's financial design—just because Aline liked him.

But Drew held his own counsel. Such fortunes as Powers Drew's are built largely on a granite-like foundation of reticence, and Tom, for all his glib gift of small

talk and his excellence as a dancer, had inherited all the father's ability to hold his tongue whenever he deemed it advisable. He had laughing blue, innocent eyes and fair curly hair, and his hands were as white as a girl's, but Tom Drew had a soul of steel and a will of iron.

He intended to "stick" the chummery there among the wu-t'ung trees and pomegranates near the river, and he intended to take his coat off now and get busy.

But he hated the chummery—didn't care any too much for the other three chums, and didn't so much as suspect that his daily lines were laid in perhaps the loveliest acre of Earth (an exquisite patch-work of perfumed verdure in summer, a dream of jades and rose and violet in spring, a carnival of color in autumn, in winter a glittering sun-dappled fairy-land of snow and ice). He did not dream that the nights there were even lovelier, more musicked, smelt sweeter than the days—though the stars of night studded the noontime blue when great events were afoot: Venus and twenty others, as they used to gem the day skies when the great Astronomer Royal of Yao watched the ten suns of China from the Kang-ku—the Vale of Sunlight.

Tom Drew saw little of the beauty that engroved the chummery, caught none of the music that fluted through the tree-tops. He was deaf. He was blind. Most of us—we of the pallid West—are blind, stone-blind, when we live in the East. The loss is ours.

Drew came out of the little chummery with his butterfly net in his hand; he was whistling "Yankee Doodle." His thoughts were in Tsi-nan Fu. He was fairly homesick for Tsi-nan, in which far inferior city he had not once been homesick for New York; but the

eagerness in his eyes was for butterflies, and his hope ran high. He'd had good luck yesterday, he might have even better to-day.

And a mile or two on he did.

Drew went briskly on, not too fast, for he went very watchfully, searching the air about him with scrupulous care; but he saw neither tree nor flower nor vine—here in the very heart of one of Earth's veriest gardens and perhaps her most storied.

He had not glanced back at the chummery as he left it. It was worth more than a glance, though. On to an old, discarded temple with the Buddhistic Lotus still on its squat dome, where a few centuries ago many bats had lived with a Buddha and a few of his stone-hewn ilk and a gaudier image of Kuan Ti (the Chinese god of Wealth, and a Taoist god at that, so universally worshiped in China then as now that the poverty-espousing cult of Buddha had been obliged to include him in the Buddhist hierarchy or perish in China), various additions half-Chinese, half-European had been built. The resultant (and cleaned and furnished) whole was the chummery in which Drew and three Englishmen lived. It had verandahs and sun-blinds, twisted glazed chimneys and luxuriant outer hangings of flowering vines and climbing fruits, rattan chairs and teak-wood tables and gay cushions and rugs on the shaded verandahs' wide floors, cool-looking thick curtains at every window to keep out sun glare and scorch. Hanging-baskets, gay and fragrant with flowers, and queer-shaped Chinese lanterns dangled from the verandah-roofs. *Punch* (only two months old), the China Year Book and a shabby sun-helmet littered one teakwood table comfortably. A spotlessly clad, deeply wrinkly

Chinese "boy" who looked as old as Lao Tzu was noiselessly spreading a larger table with an early breakfast for two:—mangoes, ripe lychees, tea, pink-and-white ham, egg-plant pancakes, ginger and cigarettes. The chummery looked a home and cozy, and it looked like a small warren of nondescript bits of different architectures, some old, some new, some of East, some of West—which is just what it was: queer, but a picture, and delightfully "homey" and clean.

But Drew had not glanced back at it, nor had he eyes—to-day, at least—for what he passed as he went on his butterfly hunt.

Ferns as tall as small trees, wild white roses in fragrant satin shoals, a "sacred" tree hung with tatters and rags of red cloth that were prayers, a tiny stream that chattered and laughed up at him from between its soft shielding walls of young willows as he easily crossed it on mossy, multi-colored stepping stones, scarcely caught his eye; nor did a gracefully slouching caravan of camels on a distant hill-path, a snowy hare that scuttled across his way, an old *fêng tun,* a stone-built tumulus on which beacon-fires had warned and signaled in the remote times of Shantung's early warfare. He passed three Confucian pencils, the small obelisks seen only in China, seen oftenest in Shantung—where there are almost no pagodas—built in memory of the Great Sage and to bring good luck. He went through the cobbled street of a four-hut hamlet bowered in sunflowers and wax-trees without sparing it a glance. He was out for butterflies—only for butterflies.

Shantung is the butterflies' home. There is no happier hunting-ground for the naturalist or the lay-amateur who goes out with nets, seeking to prison and

kill the lovely, delicate things. They fluttered past Drew, singly, by twos, in whole companies: soft pearl grays, spotted and striped, rainbowed. There were lovely aeraeinae, gigantic, marvelously colored "swift moths," pale blue hairstreaks, coppers, areolets, numberless cocoon-spinning families represented in singles, pairs and flocks—the Bombyx mori, of course, the exquisite source of most of the silks of commerce and art, and great gay-winged moths of the Saturmüdae who also spin silk of human use. He saw them all, some far, some invitingly near. But he left them alone. All that offered easy capture were varieties of which he already had specimens, and he was no butcher, for all his ruthless keenness to fill the gaps in a collection which he knew was already no mean one. One great, pale green "love fly" with its antennae of silver rose tempted him though: it almost lit on his hand, and it was so exquisitely lovely. But he had caught one yesterday—this beauty's exact counterpart—and he would not destroy another. He wished it luck as it shimmered slowly away, and he went on beating the air and the foliage fringing the faintly marked narrow foot-path with hungry eyes for what he had come out to find, and should come out to seek a dozen—or, if need be, a thousand times—till he did find and catch: the cherry-colored Imperial that was so rare that no one ever had caught one, and the majority of naturalists called it fabulous—hatched in some old, oft-repeated Chinese fairy tale. He had one book of plates, at home, that pictured it, but the "authority" that had made that volume of plates was more than suspect by the pundits of the science—notoriously inexact, imaginative, unauthoritative. All were agreed that, if the cherry Imperial did

exist at all, it only flew in remote parts of China, and even in them was very scarce—but that it was more probably the filmy figment of some long-ago Chinese poet's brain. But Tom Drew believed in it—believed it was real. And he meant to have it. He was *going* to have it. He had thought of it the day his father had first suggested his going to China, and had wondered even then if it might not be true, after all; and it had fluttered before him now and then all the way from New York to Vancouver—fluttered across the Pacific just before him. It had lit on his pillow in his dream when he slept—twice—in his storm-tossed berth. He had thought of Yo Ki but the once—in mid-ocean—and had not thought of him since. Probably he would not have recognized him even, had they met here in China where Chinese faces were so preponderantly many; but he had thought of a cherry-winged butterfly again and again, and more than once so intensely that his thought had veritably "built" it, and seen it, as fine psychics can, and do, build and see a half-opened rosebud or a long-gone face. And now he had almost no doubt that it did exist; for when he had questioned Walter Swift, who to East-ignorant Drew seemed, for all his leisurely life, with bibelots and ivories about him, and fine cigars to his hand, to have been everywhere in China and seen everything—had questioned Swift about butterflies here in Shantung, Swift had said, yes, he certainly had seen such a butterfly once, not far from the walls of K'üfu; he had noticed it especially because of the picture it had made poised on the cup of a great lemon lily's fluted edge; he had stood and watched it until it flew away and was lost out of sight, and he remembered it clearly; he never had seen another; yes, it was

just the color of a ripe red—not dark—cherry, shining in the sun. Its tiny black head had a minute burnished fleck of gold; its feelers had little knob-tips of turquoise; its fore-wings were serrated, not deeply, with just a blurred thread of sheeny green—light, soft green—and when it rose in the air, skimming above him before it fluttered quite away, he had seen that all its wings were lined with rose-silver. Tom could not doubt that Swift had seen it; for Swift owned to no special interest in butterflies; he was no naturalist; it was human beings that interested him—what they were, what they thought and did, what they had builded; and he never had heard or read of the cherry-hued butterfly before he had seen it, or since.

So Tom plodded happily on—to find and net a cherry-colored Imperial to-day, or some day.

He passed and ignored another "pencil"; he passed and ignored the most curious triple *pai-fang* in North China; he skirted an old family graveyard in which even then, as is their skulking habit, bandits were hiding, for there rarely is lack of "cover" in a Shantung graveyard; he crossed another gurgling brooklet; he very nearly fell into one that was wider and deeper; he collided painfully with a gray boulder on which patient pious hands had cut what honest Yang so often taught his people:—

"Shan yu shan pao
O yu o pao
Jo shih, yo pao
Shih-ch'ên wei tao."

Which means, by the way, "Happiness is the reward of virtue; misery is the reward of sin. If wickedness

and virtue have not had their meet payment, it is only because the time has not yet come."

And then—at rest, its poised wings wide-spread, on the up-stuck wheel of a broken barrow some thriftless coolie had left to rot on the ferns by the narrow wayside—he saw it.

There was no doubt about it. Wings of red gossamer, rose-and-silver lined, gold-flecked black head! Every lovely detail!

Drew's heart pounded painfully, pounded as it never had in football's thickest, never had dreamed of pounding in Flanders, pounded worse than it had that ghastly day when he found he had misunderstood his father over the telephone and had bought wheat long that he ought to have sold short. And a queer fear came in his eyes and a thicker fog in his throat as he stood breathless and watched the beautiful little creature—as the same sort of fog had come when Powers Drew had given a short throaty chuckle and said, "And that's the fool thing you did, is it? Just the fool thing I did myself once—to a sharper tune of loss, and when I darned well couldn't afford it, which we darned well can now. Come on to lunch; I'll stand you a tip-topper. Delmonico's or Sherry's?"

The butterfly was going. Drew followed—very softly. At the door of a tiny thatched cottage a blind man sat playing his flute. The butterfly poised, as if to listen, on a great hollyhock as red as itself. Drew crept up to it, lifted his net; the butterfly was off. The man raced after it, tossing a coin behind him. It fell with a chink of silver on the doorstep stone, and the blind man rose and bowed like a courtier, exclaiming, "I the little man am the great man's baby," before he began again to blow

soft, honey-sweet notes from his notched bamboo. The coin was acceptable, but the poor old flutist was no alms-seeker. There are few beggars in Shantung—no need of almshouses or municipal charity; the "family" nurses its sick, feeds its needy. But what the gods threw—bitter or sweet—the sightless one took; accepted with equal courtesy, almost with equal thanks.

That Chinese butterfly gave the American man "some chase!"

From flower to flower-patch, from bough to vine it wavered, back and forth, resting—never quite long enough—lighting—never quite low enough or close enough to its huntsman.

Drew never wavered. Back and forth he followed it, softly, carefully. He'd have followed it to the Jade Gate in the Great Wall which Shi-Hwang-ti raised against the threatening Tartars three hundred years before Christ's birth in Bethlehem and which still stands to-day two hundred miles north of Shantung Province—unless legs and blood-pressure had failed him.

Again and again the man gripped his net's handle and raised it carefully. On and on went the radiant, tireless Imperial. Drew's face ran sweat. More than once his mouth twitched. A bough caught his sun-hat and snatched it off. Drew left the *topee* hanging there, a strange new fruit on an old *ginko* tree. On, still on, flew the Beauty. On and on after it went Tom Drew. Never a man pursued a maid with such ardor, and never with half so much stern self-control and caution, as this American business man was pursuing a cherry-tinted butterfly through a Shantung forest.

They kept it up for hours—Drew and the cherry-colored.

CHAPTER V

THE old crenelated gray wall curled and twisted like a great lazy snake about the great house-domain it ornamented and classed far more than protected—a very old wall spotted and softened by long centuries of time and of Shantung's intense heat and cold. Here and there gay little delicate wild-flowers, seeded by birds and wind, grew in its friendly crevices: tiny cuckoo-flowers, anemones, dwarf-violets, a dozen others, wee fern and fragile vine trails. It was a curious, very beautiful wall cut into delicate and intricate patterns of stone open-work motifs—fifteen of them, each with meaning or story—repeated as in the embroideries that edge the garments (tunic, coat, and trousers) of a Chinese woman of quality, and as indicative of hills and rivers, ocean waves, wind at play and wind at war.

It was not a low wall, and in the old, old days when bows and arrows were the deadliest weapons in China's arsenals it might have been a barrier of worth. And then the now unprotected loop-holes of its open-work had been inner-lined with stout stone. Now it was little more than sheer beauty and a social mark of a family's privacy and rank.

Indeed the elaborate, almost fantastic, old wall smacked more of science than of war. On its far side the well kept brass-work of a telescope twinkled redly in the yellow sunlight.

The house and the park-like gardens it enfolded only great wealth could have owned in any part of the world.

Water shimmered between miniature groves of trees.

A gay painted junk, almost toy-small, and gayer still with beflowered silken cushions on its crimson lacquered deck, was motionless on a silver lake so motionless, too, that it might have been painted there. Flowers blinked in the sunshine. Two hundred people or more might live uncrowded in the great house that was almost as bent and twisted and irregular in outline as the old gray wall itself.

Drew—up on a hill slope—saw the gleam of the low roof's thousands of bright green tiles, and sensed that he was looking down upon a place of importance and of distinction.

There were three gates in the wall—one very large, wide and elaborate, all well devil-and-foe-guarded by gate-painted gods, flanked by small guard huts. Each gate was guarded, too, and less quietly by an ugly old cat on a chain. And it had an inconspicuous door behind the house place, unguarded except by inner bolts, a door that weeping willows and oleanders almost hid inside the wall.

A bird was singing lustily up in a loquat tree, horses and camels drowsed or champed in the stables' yard. A dozen men were washing clothes in a brook. The flop-flap of their flat wooden bats came a monotonous, soothing sound from the distance. Great-hatted gardeners and sweepers were slowly busy in paths, on ladders, at trees and bent over bushes and flower-beds. A white curl of smoke rose from a chimney as twisted and spiral as the smoke itself—smoke that told of cookery that probably never was done in a house so immense and well provided as this. The great house's other chimneys were idle. The day was too hot for fires of comfort. And they were smoke-holes, rather than

chimneys—flat and inconspicuously placed—for they were Western and recent innovations in this very Chinese dwelling.

One of the smaller gates was ajar, though no one was using it or approaching it from within or from without.

The American did not notice that, for he had little attention to spare just now. The Vermillion Palace itself would not have arrested or interested him now.

He had all but netted his prey. But the butterfly dodged him again. By chance or by purpose it flew through the half open gate.

Drew flew after it—cautiously.

The butterfly eluded, the man pursued. The butterfly did no harm—unless to a Western's edging temper; the man did; he crushed a fern, upset and damaged a priceless dwarf-tree in its costly tub. They crossed two bridges, exciting a large family of goldfish, and a bullfinch asleep in his tree-hung cage. And Drew upset not harmlessly a beautiful wind-screen as he bolted around it.

But the girl who looked up from her embroidery frame at the sound of the small crash—which Drew did not even hear—looked up and saw the injury done to lacquer-framed silk and did not care at all.

The girl who sat sewing under a great low-branching *mang-tao* tree saw Drew long before he saw her. She went on with her delicate stitchery serenely, but she sewed on without looking at needle or cambric as deft needlewomen can. Her eyes were kept on the intruder, lazy amusement lurking on her curved scarlet mouth. Her brown-black eyes had kindled the moment she saw him, as if at the sudden sight of some old and unexpected friend, tested and valued—welcomed. But she

sat quite at ease and sewed tranquilly on—watching him frankly; her eyes never left him.

The glowing insect lit on a rose-tree, heavy with blossoms as red as it, lit obligingly near the possible stretch of Drew's net. Slowly, cautiously the man moved the hand that clenched his net's long handle, lifted the net, poised it, slid it down—just too late. The butterfly had gone—gone for this time.

"Damn!"

"Bad luck"—the girl spoke softly—"but patience may do it yet."

Too absorbed in the cherry-winged that had escaped him—after all those hours of indefatigable patience and toil, Tom Drew scarcely glanced at the unexpected speaker, but stood stock-still looking up ruefully in the direction by which the butterfly had vanished. It did not occur to him to explain who he was, how he came to be there, or to apologize for his sudden and unkempt appearance in what was palpably a private garden, and high-walled at that.

The girl smiled indulgently—not because she came of a race of women accustomed to making wide allowance for the child-like vagaries of men (though we in the West talk, read and write a good deal of nonsense about that)—but because she saw that he did not see, scarcely heard, her and had no idea and less care where he was—lost and immersed in his butterfly duel—a great big, muscular man and a gossamer wisp of red butterfly, and because his appearance itself was distinctly droll. Even Chinese men are inclined to cover their heads when they plunge through the heat of such days as this. The intruder had no hat. His thin shirt was soaked and clung to him in wet and revealing intimacy;

his shoes were a pitiful sight—and not a clean one; his belt was askew and so was his easy tie; and he looked hotter and redder and sweatier than any of all the uncomfortably warm persons she ever had seen till now.

"If you don't dash after it now—let it forget you are trying to catch it—you may get it yet, I think."

"Dash after it!" Tom retorted testily; "how am I to dash after it when I don't know where the blighter's gone, I'd like to know." Dash after it indeed! As if he didn't know pretty much all there was to know about catching butterflies!

"But I do," the girl said gently. She was still sewing; she had not stopped for the beat of a thread. "It is up there in that *pai kuo* tree—way, way up; you can't possibly get it—yet. If you go but a step toward the *pai kuo* tree, it will be off and away. But if you wait, presently it will move; and then you may. It is hiding now back of a leaf, and resting too. I think the poor little thing is tired. They fly incredible lengths; but I suppose they do get tired sometimes, even the butterflies. But I don't believe it is as tired as you are. You look very tired." Her voice was level, but there was a hint of laughing at him in her eyes. "Won't you sit down and rest, and get cool, and get your breath? And it's your best chance to catch your cherry-jewel in the end. But they are not easily caught. I never heard of one being caught. There are not many of them—very few. I can recommend that chair; it is most comfortable."

Drew had not quite "come back" yet. And he was still gazing greedily up into the ether. "Cherry-jewel," he repeated blankly.

"We call them that. I don't know what their

scientific name is—if they have one—if your naturalists have found them out."

Drew pulled his hunt-sodden wits together a bit then, and looked down towards the bench, and saw the girl who sat there sewing.

Ye gods! It was a Chinese woman! Where had he landed himself this time? Or was she a Japanese? Shantung was thick with Japs. And he couldn't tell Japanese and Chinese apart half the time. A great many Europeans never learn to. Instinctively he looked for her feet. They were perfectly visible, and certainly not deformed—quite nice feet, but every bit as big as Molly's. But that did not help him out much. Little as he had learned about China—and it was not improbable that, no matter how long he stayed there, he never would learn much—he had discovered that not all Chinese women were small-footed. This girl was wearing "court shoes," he thought Molly called them (he called them "slippers"), that might have been Molly's: a high-heeled, brown suède, a butterfly—oddly enough a butterfly—worked on each toe in tiny steel beads. The silk stockings might have been Molly's too—though usually Molly wore thinner stockings than these. Then he looked at the rest—more like the trim things English women wore than like what many women wore at home, he thought: a plain brown skirt, a white silk shirt-waist almost as plain. The girl herself looked intelligent he thought, and she certainly had none of the shrinking shyness that he'd supposed all Oriental women had. This one hadn't—that was sure. She sat there as sure of herself as if she owned the earth. An American girl couldn't have looked more at home in an unexpected, unrehearsed situation. Ruffled, flut-

tered? Well—not so you'd notice it! *This* was a lady —that was his next observation. It startled him. And at that point Tom Drew would have removed his hat, if it had not been a few miles away stuck on a *ginko* branch. It had not dawned on him before that there *were* Chinese ladies. Upon a good many of his countrymen and quite as many of other white races it never dawns. Whether this girl was pretty or not he couldn't tell—the "lay" of her face was too alien to the American eyes. But he could tell that she was "somebody," and that for all her quiet graciousness she certainly knew it. Tom Drew was a very good judge of character —a valuable asset he'd inherited from his father, an asset without which few such fortunes as the elder Drew's are quickly made, and above all in the United States.

From the girl on the bench he took a wider survey. What an astonishing place! It was not a tropical garden. Shantung is far from the equator, snow-covered, ice-bound in winter. The old garden had more delicacy than exoticness of beauty. Feathery grasses, more than man-tall, swayed film-like in tiny buffets of wind so slight that only such feathers could have felt it for wind. Wistaria clung to arches hidden by its green and violet profusion, arches twisted and repeated, something *torii* and *pai-fang* in shape. Late summer violets, incredibly sweet, tiny pink and white lilies, sweeter than the violets, peeped up everywhere. Curling, knotted ribbons of sandal-wood musk ran like baby rivulets through the grass; wind flowers and tulips made pools of rainbow here and there; great roomy stone benches carved into lace and embroidery commanded you to look, proclaimed their own costliness gravely, tempted you to rest and to lounge; a green silken stream ran under a camel-back

bridge of gleaming cut and interlaced red marble half smothered in honeysuckle and jasmine. But it was the exquisite sweep of the great walled garden, its wanton, unexpected turns and twists, loops and bends, its trees and the sparkling sky above it that made its chief loveliness. An imperial garden! Through a long vista irregularly framed by maiden-hair trees, firs and grove-like clumps of the beautiful *huai shu,* the dwelling house showed with its net-work of courtyards and outhouses clustered nestling in and about it. It looked to Drew a picture painted on canvas, created by some artist's exotic imagination—rather than a house; a marvel to look at and wonder at, not a building to live in, move about in, cook in, eat food in, speak aloud in—a surprising theatrical achievement.

Too far, too sprawling and vast, too intricate, too utterly strange for any grasp of details his amazed Westbound eyes could make, it gave Tom Drew his first realization—if slight—of China. He gasped as he looked. It gave him an uncomfortable sense of personal smallness.

"Jerusalem! Where am I?"

"Not in Jerusalem," she told him with a tiny laugh, half tantalizing, but all kindness. "You are in our garden. Do sit down—you'd much better. The cherry-jewel hasn't moved, I'm watching. This is my father's garden, and what I'd like to know is how you got in."

"Walked in—I apologize. I can't say I particularly noticed just how I navigated my entrance—I wasn't thinking of much but his nibs up there—and I'm afraid I didn't ring the bell or anything. I'm sorry. It's kind of you not to put me out," he added, as he sat down at last, openly weary, in the big cushioned teak-wood

chair. It *was* comfortable—very. Drew gave a happy sigh of gratitude as he found his handkerchief and wiped his hot and humid face.

"No, you certainly did not ring the bell; there is no bell to ring. I suppose the west gate was open and Sang Bo asleep on his pipe. I'm sorry for Bo, if my grandmother finds him. That must be how you got in, I suppose. You scarcely could have climbed the wall without knowing it, could you?"

"No," Drew grinned. "I wasn't quite so daft, I think. But 'pon my word, I've no idea how I did get in. I hope I haven't got poor old Bo into trouble! Your watch dog?"

"One of our gate keepers. He smokes too much—poppy. Do not you worry about Sang Bo. The grandmother often beats him. He's very used to it by now."

"Poor Bo!"

The girl laughed gaily. "Grandmothers do what they like in China. Well, never mind how you got in." She laid down her work and looked at him gravely—leaned a little towards him in her earnestness, an odd note of reverence, and even of tenderness in her delicate voice. "However you got in, you are very, very welcome, Mr. Drew."

CHAPTER VI

IT is improbable that any American woman has ever been speechless; but once in a very great while sheer inability to muster his voice or a word smites an American man. Drew was dumb with astonishment. He

gazed at the Chinese—if she was Chinese—girl blankly, blinked at her in amazed stupefaction.

How did *she* know his name? Who was she? What was she? Where was he? Had they met before? Of course not; he never had spoken to a Chinese woman in his life, not even to a shopkeeper's wife in Tsi-nan. He had met, he believed, all the white women of any social position in Lady Rutherford's drawing-room. She kept as open a house as the restricted European population, floating or fixed, of Tsi-nan Fu made possible; but like himself, she seemed to have little flair for yellow. He had met no Orientals at her bungalow, and certainly Thing Fong had introduced him to no female relations of his. How in thunder did this girl know his name? And she did know it—no guess-work about it. She had spoken his name as clearly and confidently as if it were a household word.

And as he thought that, she said it—answering his unspoken thought as the Chinese so marvelously often do—answered his thought, and spoke his name again. That she could do it! If she had dubbed him Smith or Jones or even Jonathan, as we impertinently dub most Chinese "John" when we don't go further and call them "Chink" or "heathen Chinee"! But she called him Drew. And Drew was not one of the commonest names even in New York or even in Philadelphia, and he'd have bet even money that there'd never a Drew come to China before!

"Your name is a household word with us, Mr. Drew," she said, "and one we speak with gratitude always. You are very very welcome here."

Then she waited patiently for him to speak—a small friendly smile on her little red mouth.

in a New York paper? He did not remember that there'd ever been one. And those things never looked like you anyway. And she had recognized him. And she'd said "photograph" as if she'd meant photograph.

"I have three photographs of you—just you yourself—and a great many more of you in groups." Even then he did not guess—perhaps because he was past guessing now. "I had four of you, but the grandmother took the one she liked best. It is on our ancestral altar. The grandmother does it obeisance. She has adopted you, Mr. Drew. Every day I worship you"—the girl made the blazing statement quite simply—"I have for years. We all do."

Tom tried neither to speak nor to think. But a fluttering wondering questioned him: "Am I drunk or crazy?" Tom Drew had never been tipsy in his life, and if no one ever had mistaken him for a genius, still less had any one ever suspected him of mental aberration. He had suspected girls of liking him, before this one—once or twice he had hoped it. But not the gayest-tongued girl he'd ever known at home ever had told him that she worshiped him. He knew well enough—as every American man must—that girls came into the world to be worshiped, not to worship, if there was any worship about it. "I worship you" grated. It wasn't a nice thing for any girl to do, and it was a horrible thing for any girl to say. Tom appreciated appreciation as well as the next one; but, hang it all, he wasn't out to be worshiped by any yellow girl ever born. His taste was offended. His gorge rose. Adopted by some old yellow beldame into the bargain, was he? He'd watch it! Was he bewitched—plumb dotty? He'd heard weird stories of what might happen to you in

China. Walter Swift had said seriously that there was something in some of them; but he, Tom, never had believed a word of them. Who with sense could? They were just stuff. But! What had happened to him in this crazy country anyway? If there was much more of it, he'd go back quicker than he'd come. Aline Rutherford-Carmichael had pulled his leg, in sheer fun; that was right enough—just a joke he'd tumbled for. But here was another woman he'd never seen or heard tell of in all his born days, claiming old acquaintance too—a Chinese girl!—a girl who had looked a lady, odd as it was that a Chinese girl should, until she had told him that she worshiped him. And she had said it without a tremor, looked him straight in the eyes, not blushed even.

Was the girl mad, or was he? Or had he stumbled into some terrible den of Chinese iniquity? He'd make tracks! Without a fuss if he could, with all the fuss imaginable if he had to. Tom Drew was no Puritan, but he was wholesome—and he had promised his father several things.

He rose quietly.

But the girl said, "You have no idea who I am, I see. Just at first I almost hoped you had come to see us. That was foolish of me, for you were thinking of nothing but the cherry-jewel. Your being here is just an accident. A very precious accident for us, Mr. Drew."

Hang it all! He'd been an ass and a cad. This girl was all right! Her girlish dignity was unmistakable; the candor and self-respect in her proud soft eyes was a guarantee. Whatever the riddle did mean, it meant nothing wrong with her.

"You protected my brother, when he needed a friend sorely—at Har-vard."

Then he knew, of course. Great Peter, he'd walked right into Yo Ki and all his people! At least he'd run himself pretty square against Yo's sister. Probably the boy Yo Ki himself was there. He'd heard that the Chinese all lived together—a Chinese family—hundreds of them sometimes, all the generations alive. Here was a nice kettle of fish. Well, he'd jumped into it, and he must jump out of it as well and as quickly as he could. But no need to be rude to the girl.

"You are Miss Ki," he said. "I never thought of that, you see I didn't know your brother at all well—and—"

"No one, except the few other Chinese students, knew him well," the girl said a little sadly; "but you saved him from a great catastrophe, Mr. Drew. Ki was very grateful to you, and we are deeply grateful—"

"Oh"—Drew brushed it aside—"that was nothing."

"It was a great deal to my brother. It is everything to us."

"But it was nothing, Miss Ki."

She corrected him smilingly.

"No, I am not Miss Ki. I am Miss Yo."

Drew flushed with annoyance. He had learned that much, since he had landed in China. We all learn a few such superficial things of China, if we live there long enough, in spite of our consistent attempts to learn nothing.

"Of course! Don't know how I got it twisted. I beg your pardon, Miss Yo." But he had not known at Cambridge that Yo was the Chinese freshman's surname.

He had known almost nothing of Yo Ki and had cared considerably less.

"I hope he's well, your brother?" Drew asked rather lamely.

To his horror the girl's eyes filled with instant tears. "He is in our graveyard, Mr. Drew. Yo Ki died at Har-vard, about one year after you graduated."

"Dear me, I am sorry to hear that." It was feeble, but the best that he could contrive. And—here with the girl beside him, so like girls at home in her dress, so Chinese in face—somehow he felt guilty that he had not known of Yo Ki's death. There was no reason why he should, of course. He had not been back to Harvard since he'd graduated. And he had lost sight of many a classmate who had been of his own race, and almost his intimate at the University. But it made him feel in some odd way in the wrong—as if he'd done this delicate, friendly young thing a harshness.

If the girl felt this, she did not show it. And, too, it was evident that she did not intend to let her own grief—quick and sharp after six years—intrude on him, or dull the radiant welcome that by right of his goodness and their gratitude was his in the home of the Yos. Her tears did not fall, and she at once began to speak brightly about something else. And then their talk—it was mostly hers—grew gay; and though Drew was still perturbed, and wondered a little ungraciously when he could go, he was far from bored. And he forgot all about the tiny cherry-winged thing up there in the *pai kuo* tree—if it still was there.

CHAPTER VII

WHEN Miss Yo asked, after a while, if he were rested and would come with her to the house, "or shall I call a servant to bid my father and mother and the old grandmother to come to you here?" he made such excuse as he could think of to evade both suggestions. They filled him with considerable dismay. He must go at once now; he had cut his time for keeping an important engagement much too short already; he was not dressed suitably for paying his respects to Mr. and Mrs. Yo. Another day, if he might be allowed to call— But the Chinese girl was sweetly imperative and brushed his excuses aside as lightly as one does new-spun cobwebs.

"I should not be forgiven if I let you go without a better welcome than mine, Mr. Drew. It would grieve them too much. And my grandmother would beat me."

Drew looked the incredulous question he could not ask.

Miss Yo shook her head—meaning "yes," not "no." "Indeed she does," she said with a twinkle of laughing. "This is China, you know. When I was at school in England the thing that amazed me most—and it took me years to realize it at all—was that there were many there who did not fear their grandparents or obey them in all things. It goes very hard with us all, if we displease the old grandmother, and we are careful not to do it; only we do not always know just what she will like or dislike. She's a wonderful woman, my honorable grandmother; very accomplished, very learned, and terribly fierce. She angers easily. When she is but

little vexed she berates and storms; when she is really angry she beats. But she is very kind; she has not beaten me since I was a child, and rarely then. My mother she never has struck, and I am sure that she never beat Ki. But she often beats my father. All the concubines taste her stick now and then, and the servants eat it constantly. My married sisters come home here to visit us sometimes, and although, of course, they are not of our family now, and the grandmother has no right of rule over them now, she beats them both if they displease her. She says that No's mother-in-law is soft and over-indulgent and that Pong-o's husband spoils her. She is a very wonderful woman always, the old grandmother, and when she chooses she is very charming. You will like the grandmother."

Drew doubted it.

"And you she will not beat. She will fall at your feet and worship you."

"Oh, I say, she mustn't do that. It would make a gibbering idiot of me. I didn't do anything much—any other fellow would have done it. I tell you what, Miss Yo; you let me make tracks now and call another day"—which he'd take good care he didn't! This was awful.

"You must not put our gratitude behind you like that," she pleaded. "It would hurt the grandmother too much. She is very old and very sweet; we all love her very dearly—even the babies when she beats them hardest, I think."

"Oh, I say, you are making fun of me. The old lady doesn't beat babies, I know."

"Indeed she does—one of them almost every day. And my father's youngest concubine, who is an imp to

the rest of us—my mother spoils her so—hides from the grandmother and is very careful in her presence.

Tom Drew—from New York—had gone very red when the Chinese girl had suggested that an old Chink woman might fall at his feet. A deeper, uglier crimson flooded him now, neck and face. He had heard of Chinese concubinage; but that a mere girl, and so seemingly a nice girl, a lady, should mention her own father's disgraceful female associate, and without a tremor, was the most horrible thing he ever had known.

He steered away from the concubine hurriedly. "You needn't tell me that your grandmother beats babies; nothing will make me believe it."

"I don't mean what you think, Mr. Drew," the girl giggled prettily. "We have no real babies," she added a little sadly, "none but the handmaidens, here at home with us—except when my sisters visit us. We Chinese call our peasants and servitors 'the babies' because they have children's minds. We have to look after them and think for them, just as you do for little children. The grandmother does it with her stick when she thinks they need it. But she is very wise, and they all revere and love her—excepting Sang Bo—I'm afraid Bo loves nothing except his pipe."

Convinced that he'd have to go through it, Tom rose reluctantly and followed Miss Yo through the garden towards the house. But he'd see that it didn't happen again. And he put up a hot prayer that his introduction to the family of Yo Ki might be spared the presence of Yo Ki's father's youngest concubine. But, if she was of the family group on view, he reflected with an inward chuckle, he'd have *some* letter to write the next time he wrote to his own respected father.

It was very beautiful—this Chinese garden. It aped nature, of course; every Chinese garden does, that is more than the tiny patch at a peasant's hut. And if the gardens of affluent Chinese homesteads look odd and theatrical to unsympathetic Western eyes, they have this value to the courtyard-locked woman of China: they give her a living picture of the outer world that she does not see, mimicking for her its hills and torrents, its rocks and ravines, its wild mountain paths and soft sylvan glades; a set theatrical scene, if you will, but beautifully and piously "set"—ravishment, refreshment, adventure and freedom to home-bound Chinese women.

Few not-imperial gardens were as large as this of the Yos, and not one of the "Old Buddha's" own was lovelier or more exquisitely kept.

It was a garden of gardens—many gardens in one—park-like again and again with velvet green swards sentinelled by great trees with mat-like foliage and black, silver and copper-red trunks; in other parts cut by lily-ponds, trellises of flowering, low outspread trees, barriers of high peonies and curtains and screens of bamboo into many sequestered nooks; a garden to live in, a garden to dream in.

It had its hills and its rills—man-made ones—its great boulders of rock that must have been brought and placed there by incredible human strength and industry, a score of lakes, ponds, pools and fish tanks, fruit as lovely as flowers, trained against low sunny walls, all the flowers that grow in Shantung province and a dozen that never had grown there until this Yo girl had brought them back with her from England and coaxed them to take root and joy in the homeland of a girl who had taken none in theirs.

There were tea-houses and a temple. And there were violets and bamboos everywhere.

From the bosom of one fern-and-willow-fringed lake a great bed of brilliant land flowers seemed to be growing out of the water—growing in fact on an earth-heaped raft.

Birds flew through the tree-tops, birds sang in tree-hung cages. Peacocks strutted across the paths and sunned their jewels on a terrace. Wind-harps, hung among the roses, would sigh and sing to the roses at the first stir of air. Willows wept over the snow-berries.

Miss Yo suddenly stopped with a little gasp of self-reproach. "Oh—Mr. Drew—your butterfly—I forgot!"

So had Tom Drew. But he only said, "Let it go, I daresay it has." It had some time ago. "I don't want it now"—which was perfectly true. Tom Drew wished for nothing now but to escape. He'd have given several years' income to be out of this. He was feeling a particularly awful fool. But he had the good nature towards women and the easy chivalry towards them that is the inheritance of most American men; he could not credit that old Mrs. Yo was so completely "It" as her grand-daughter claimed; and yet he came of a race whose men's deepest grained conviction is that women will have their way, and the sooner you let them the better for you. Vexed, embarrassed, sulky at heart and soul, he kept all that under rather gallantly; and he went on, seemingly fairly cheerful, beside the Chinese girl—on through twisting yellow paths, sunshine pouring down from the brazen Chinese sky, slanting through the thin interstices of the lush leafage on either side, perfume dripping from a thousand flowers: perfume fanned now and then by lazy hints of breeze.

There were curled stretches of that yellow path beside which no near trees grew, and then Tom wished painfully that he had not lost his helmet.

Evidently these Yos were not poor. They passed many blue-clad gardeners and garden-scavengers, tiptoed figures, and men and boys on bamboo-rope ladders. They were training vines, thinning high branches where fruit grew too thickly, sweeping leaves from the path already so well-kept that it was burnished from the constant, lavish labor of the patient, supple coolie fingers. At their approach each down-bent coolie rose and bent low before he turned away, until they had passed him, and even the men and boys on the perilous-looking swinging rope-ladders, bowed without looking and then turned away and were motionless. Did it annoy them too much to see their young mistress, Western-clad, walking beside a Western man, Drew wondered, or was it the rule of such Chinese households for servitors to turn humbly away from those they toiled for?

It seemed to him a long way to the house, but they came to it at last. It looked more like some gigantic, scaled worm than like any reasonable sort of a house. This was his first thought, as he caught sight of it when a turn in the toy hill-path they were descending now revealed it lying below them: a long irregular thing for the most part of one story, with many inset verandahs and several walled-in adjutments. Dozens of lanterns—some so odd that the American did not suspect them to be lanterns at all—hung from the upturned lips of the green and glazed roof. The house as a whole faced south, but it also sprawled and turned, now to the east, now to the north, south, west, back again. Over each section the tent-shaped roof lifted its gleaming green to

the down-pouring gold of the regnant sun. Many of the windows were paned with thick silk-like oiled paper, others were beautifully paned with glass. Half as many baskets of growing flowers and vines, as lanterns, hung from the edges of the roof. Tom thought the great devil-screen towards which his insistent hostess led him, the ugliest he'd seen yet, and he'd seen some hideous ones in Weihaiwei and Tsi-nan Fu, and he did not suspect that this was one of the costliest in all China. This *chao-pi* had cost five thousand *tael;* the bent iron-work that framed its three brazen panels of copper *repoussé* was more beautiful than any that the West has seen; and the "spirit wall" dated back to a time when human labor was even cheaper than now there and the *tael* a weight of price and much purchase in China. A long, lean cat, almost greyhound tall, yowled loudly at a chain's full stretch. Miss Yo paid it no attention; but Drew wondered pityingly if it would not pull its head off as it struggled at its collar. It was the least pleasing cat he ever had beheld. Were there no Societies for the Prevention of Cruelty to Animals in China? He wondered what his mother—she loved pussies—would say to this; he well knew what his Aunt Anne would! She was a militant officer of the *New Hampshire Society for the Prevention of Cruelty to Animals,* and almost sure, Drew feared, to leave all she had—it was several thousands—to a cat's home or a donkey's rest.

The *chao-pi* had no other guard but the lank and ancient cat—and needed none; for to pass by it and so reach the house-gate, or door of entrance, it was necessary to turn sharply around and behind one end of the *chao-pi.* And that no evil spirit has the wit to do, for all evil things are silly and feeble of mind.

"Mr. Drew," the girl said, as she led him around the devil-screen, "the grandmother has not heard that China is a republic. Please do not say that before her. We keep it from her, because we fear that her fury might kill her."

"But surely she sees it in the papers!"

"No; the grandmother cannot read."

"She is blind!"

"Indeed she is not. She has the quickest, sharpest eyes in China. She cannot read—that is all!"

"But, you said"—Drew began, then checked himself.

"That she was very learned. She is. But she cannot read the characters or write them. She was born in a clan whose women are not taught to read or write, though many of them are scholarly. Reading and writing are a small part of education—do you not think?—and not at all essential."

Drew could only stare his amazement.

"We read to her often. But fortunately she rarely bids us that we read anything but old books—the classics and her favorite poets. Once in a very long time she does tell one of us to read a paper to her, and then we have to be very careful."

"Does she speak English?"

Miss Yo dimpled. "The Grandmother speaks only Chinese—two of our nineteen Chinese languages, the Mandarin and our Shantung speech—and sometimes she breaks out suddenly into the tongue of her own birth-province, just a few words of it. But she speaks no foreign language. She pays little heed to anything out of China. It took my brother a long time to gain her permission to go to America to school, but she could deny Ki nothing. And when he began to wish it, it was her

own suggestion that I should be sent first to see if Ki would be comfortable. I was not quite ten then, but I was sent to England with girl friends whose parents wished for them an English school. And the grandmother never has realized that England and America are not the same place. Our honorable old one knows no English but your name. It she knows perfectly, both ways: as your friends called you and as the Har-vard lists did. I have had to say it to her, again and again, until she knows the English sound of it and can say it so—but that is all the English she knows to say or to understand. The venerable grandmother hated with venom all from the West; now she calls it a garden of jades—because you are of that West. I think that for you she will wrench sprays from the holy crystal tree itself, and I know that for you she will have found and caught half the cherry-beauties in Shantung. You will be careful, will not you, Mr. Drew?''

''Trust me!'' Tom said drily. ''I'll betray not a single secret to your grandmother, if she understands only Chinese.''

CHAPTER VIII

THE low, long-outspread house that he had looked upon as he came down the hill-sloped path blinked at Drew gaily as they neared it and passed behind the spirit wall to what he supposed was its front-door.

For all its smiting oddness, the great house looked entirely cheerful; for all its fantastic splendor, it looked homelike: a smiling house in a smiling land.

Perturbed, bored even, as he was by this enforced

visit to the family circle of Yo Ki, the New Yorker could not fail to thrill a little both with crass curiosity and with a more creditable kindling interest in a human habitation to him so new, so unexpected and inexplicable. No Western of any intelligence could have failed to thrill a little at the first near view of such a dwelling as this—as amazing to Western eyes as a city slum child's first sight of the sea, the first sight of a great mountain range to a life-long plain-dweller, the sudden sight of some great tropic bird or tawny jungle beast to a New England child whose vision till then had seen no animal life more exotic than the barnyard fowls and the cows of the farm he'd been born on.

Tom remembered a "Chinesey" house that friends of his lived in in Chicago, a house remotely like and emphatically unlike a small segment of this. The bravest architect in America can achieve little of Chinese plan or erection, can but nibble awkwardly at Chinese-like detail, grasp nothing of Eastern vision. Where there is no vision the architect bungles. And the richest millionaire of Chicago's many could not afford to own a long enough stretch on the lake-shore drive where once Joliet and Marquette knelt to pray in the lush golden-rod that grew about the wigwams, nor one *half* long enough, for the linked lengths of a great Chinese home. Tom Drew neither had seen nor had imagined any dwelling-place like this.

Yet it was ordinary enough as a house of great Chinese wealth. It seemed a maze of a place, an endless jungle of rooms and courtyards, as the girl led him through room to courtyard and across courtyard to room again and again. In actual space the Yo house perhaps enclosed more of courtyards than of rooms.

Through the *ta-mên* (the house "great gate") with the gate-keeper's room beside it, down all the length of the *t'ing-tzu-lang*, across the *t'ing* itself (the reception hall beyond which visitors of no real intimacy rarely penetrated), down another *lang*-passage and into the inner *t'ing*, where friends of kin or of the great rank were welcomed, Miss Yo led Tom Drew. Then on she led across the great roofless, stone-paved *ch'ih*, empty and ungarnished except by the hyacinths and dwarf-trees that stood in pots against its walls, through more passages and rooms (each room a palace), more court-yards (each a veritable garden of flowers), until at last the girl paused at a lacquered panel and clapped her hands sharply. An inside bolt slid back in a moment or two, and then the panel, too, slid open.

The old serving-woman who had unbolted the panel gave the white man a puzzled look from under her eye-lids, as she drew respectfully aside to let them pass.

"Ka Sun is surprised that she see you here," Miss Yo told him with a smile. "You are in a Chinese 'flowery,' Mr. Drew. No man not of our immediate blood ever has been here before. And you are bolted in!" she added with a little silver giggle.

Drew smiled, a trifle vaguely.

"My honorable father cares not if the women's quarters are locked or not, nor does our honorable mother. They have made the advance with the time—as far as it is comfortable to them. They are content to see it, as you say, 'tried out,' the young new way of China. But the great one who rules us, with her wisdom and her stick, would not so let it. For her approving it is needed that we keep most strict our fragrant *kuei*—the running-horse two-story apartments of our women. You hear it

called, learned it, perhaps *'tso ma lou';* it has many names, the fragrant, flowery staying place of Chinese women."

"But," the man expostulated nervously, "hadn't I better go back? I'm sure I'd better. It will annoy the old lady terribly—my being here."

The girl nodded violently, then—remembering that Chinese "no" is English "yes"—shook her head even more violently than she had nodded it.

"That is the nonsense. I tell you before in the outside-of-all garden that the sweet venerable pearl-of-all-women has taken you in adoption. I take you to her now. You make her your visit now in one minute of time."

Drew fidgeted lamely, but thought of nothing more to urge for escape. Except for themselves and the woman standing impassively and with downcast eyes by the panel she had re-secured, this room was humanly empty. But it was graciously littered with a number of things that did not strike Drew as by any possibility masculine belongings.

Miss Yo crossed the room, and the American followed her, because he did not know what else to do.

"We are there!" she told him, as she pushed back a panel that needed no unbolting. And Tom Drew, who had been well brought up in New York and in his tenderer years had gone to Sunday-school fairly regularly, looked out upon the *t'ien ching,* or Heaven's Well: the courtyard of a Chinese harem.

They had come through but one center section—no more than a slice—of the vast house; but it seemed to Drew that they had traveled a mile from that preposterous copper-and-black spirit-wall. He wondered if

that antique cat chained out there was still yowling or had pulled its head off yet!

Then as he looked he forgot all that ever before he had seen or thought or felt.

That Chinese courtyard was a picture! A great people's history storied, an immense national life, packed between the carven walls of the peony-blazed garden of the Yo ladies' pleasance, lined on fifty yellow faces.

Drew saw it in one blur of twenty colors and utter strangeness. And, indistinctly as his astonished eyes focussed it, the gauche embarrassment that had stalked him across the outer grounds gripped him hard: a nervousness that was almost something akin to fear.

He did not see in detail—not then; but he was destined to be here again—often, intimately—until each of those queer yellow faces, each of the flaming flowers that brocaded the courtyard, were as easy to his eyes as friends in New York and the vistas of Central Park were, and were cut deeper in his memory: a pulsing miniature of all China that Tom Drew will hold and wear to his grave. Wall Street will not erase it, years cannot dim it, no wife of his own race ever will tarnish or smudge it: Tom Drew's first "look in" at real China, his first "listening in" to the greatest epic in human history, the human epic of Earth's greatest, finest people. The Iliad, Hamlet, Wilhelm Meister—they are nursery rhymes, pretty, almost inconsequent ditties, measured by the human epic of China!

China leashed in leading-strings by a League of Nations! China throttled by Bolshevism! China the vassal of Europe, of America, *or of Japan.* For a madman's day, perhaps—skin deep; but at core, to last, to matter—beyond a martyred generation's agony—never!

Not when the North Pole quivers into molten lava, not when the Equator quickens into eternal ice!

Into the ladies' courtyard the concubines do not come without permission—permission which only the *wives* and mothers can grant them; no man can give it, not even the man head of the family.

As Drew's eyes cleared a little, he caught his breath at the loveliest loveliness he ever had seen; and his sturdy American heart sickened, his insular gorge rose and rebelled, because the exquisite creature was, he was sure, one of the concubines that attended their Chinese lord to the "lascivious pleasing of a lute." None other could be so thickly painted, wear garments so tinselled and silken, smell so sweet of the drench of ambergris and attar; look at once so butterfly-fragile, so seductively beautiful and so unmistakably useless. Drew was no Puritan. Few of us are who have left New England a generation or two back, and only a modest proportion of those of us who never have left New England at all—not even those to whom Boston is as well Paris and Bagdad and Mecca, and Cape Cod is Ostend, Brighton and Monte Carlo. Drew was no moral stickler. He had not led a monastic life at Harvard. Not all his New York days and none of his New York nights had been spent in Wall Street, not every New York Sunday had found him in Grace Church. He knew a *demi-mondaine* when he saw one. But to Powers Drew's son it was a noisome enormity that any girl déclassée should be so supremely lovely: that vice—putrid Chinese vice at that—should look so ethereal, so alluringly lovely, so delicate, dainty and flower-like.

Yo Su—as he learned her name later—stood poised on one almond-foot lightly, tossing and catching lazily,

deftly, a great "snow-ball" with a small lace-like ivory racket. She went on at her pastime, neither slowing nor quickening a stroke; but she turned her head frankly toward him and smiled. Her carmined lips curved away from her exquisite teeth; a dimple played in her white-and-rose painted face—cracking its powdery varnish a trifle; and her velvet black eyes danced and beckoned under her moth-wing ebony eyebrows. The frankest American girl would not have looked up so at a strange man; no, nor bachelor girl of the most emphatically enfranchised type—not if she'd had three votes, her S.L. D. and clod-hopper boots. So this was China! And Miss Yo had seemed a nice girl! But she couldn't be —not living here in this human abomination where her father's favorite wanton openly ogled a strange man, and an alien, in her very presence.

Drew was making a mistake. Westerns often do in the West. Yo Su was smiling welcome to Miss Yo. She had no eyes for western men. She disliked, despised—and endured them when she had to. Her eyes had claimed the older girl, but ignored the white stranger as her young Chinese soul did. Miss Yo, accustomed by her English school years to Western faces, thought their new guest good-looking. The younger girl thought all such men disfigured, human abortions. She never looked at them if she could avoid it.

The courtyard was fringed with servants: quiet, waiting to be summoned to some service, blue-clad, placid, well-fed, soft-shod. And there were dogs, of course, for this was Shantung and a rich man's courtyard: little soft balls and streaks of black and golden fluff with jolly important faces and impish eyes—"spectacled" many of them—romping between the oleanders, dozing beneath

the azaleas. Some of the doggies were smooth of coat and had almost no tails, or curled-over tails that looked like tight little rosettes; others carried plumy "chrysanthemum" tails proudly and wore feathers of silken hair on their funny feet and on their dear little impudent noses.

By the lotus pond—centering the courtyard, of course—was grouped the Yo family: a man, perhaps in his late fifties, his wife and his mother. All were in Chinese raiment. Yo, except that his queue had been cut from his head, might have been a vase-figure come to life. He sat reading. Mrs. Yo looked little older than her daughter. If her round, good-natured face had a line in it, it showed none. Paint hides years on still plump faces. Mrs. Yo's face was very plump—all of her was. And her face was thickly painted—painted openly with the deep layer of red and chalk-white which is a Chinese decency and no attempt at pretended natural roses and lilies. Her trousers were as pink as her cheeks; her tiny yellow hands were hidden to the knuckles by the rings she wore; her violet jacket was smothered in embroidered rose and lemon chrysanthemums and green and bronze humming-birds; her breast was heavy with beads; her elaborate hair shone beneath silk flowers and stick-pins of carved gold, kingfisher's feathers and sparkling rainbows of jeweled fire. A tiny fan of gauze and ivory lay spread out on her knee. She was squatted on a blue and green embroidered cushion. She was eating peanuts and melon seeds industriously and crackingly from a heaped blue and white bowl beside her, feeding herself deftly with long ivory chop-sticks.

So tiny that she might have been a child of ten, so wrinkled and white-locked that she well might have turned her century of life, so scantily and drably clad

that she might have been a beggar with a flair for personal neatness, so imperious and sharp of eyes that she might have been the great imperial dowager, a woman sat on a low stool beside a lower table on which lay an inlaid table-lute, a great bowl of goldfish and a very tiny tawny dog. She was smoking. Her pipe's long stem flashed with little emeralds; the three tassels of red silk that dangled from its minute bowl were beaded with turquoise, moon-stones and topaz. Her shoes, not four inches long, were priceless with pearls and jade. She wore no jewels, not a hair ornament or a flower; she smelt to heaven with ambergris and tuberose. Her left hand served her for smoking, and with her right she was teasing the fat and gleaming goldfish with a spray of rosy flowered azalea. A slave-girl knelt at her elbow, quick to refill the pipe that three whiffs emptied. And it was the little old woman's wrinkled face that the servants at the courtyard's edge watched as they waited.

Strange to tell of a Chinese courtyard, in a "flowery," no one was speaking; but under the oleanders that the wistarias behind them overtopped, behind the tulips beyond the lotus tank five servants, not blue clad, or coarsely, but in brilliant satins, were making music on a paper drum and pair of silver cymbals, a long, large flute of painted lacquer, a heart-shaped mouth-harp and a great *kin* of olive wood. And their eyes never left the tiny withered figure crouching over the fretted goldfish. A lift of her snow-white eyebrow would hush them; until she hushed them they would play on. One glance from her, and Mrs. Yo would have left her bowl of peanuts and melon seeds alone; one glance from her and Yo would have flung his book aside; one word from her whispered listlessly would have electrified every one

else of that courtyard's half hundred to instant, swift, anxious, scrupulous, unquestioning obedience. Wizened, toothless, almost bald—she ruled here, gracious as a woodland pool in summer in her contentment, a devil-wrought tempest in her vexation. She had seared her hand and arm in rescuing a peasant baby's rag-doll from the flaming hearth-fire, and laughed her own hurt to scorn; she had torn Yo's face with her nails—Yo, lord and owner of all here. There were but two here she had not struck, none she had not badgered, none she had not served and succored. She had never misused an animal, a child or a flower, never forgiven an enemy, forgotten a wrong, been unjust or pitiful, never had tolerated a foreigner. To be not Chinese was to be an abominable stench in her proud, tiny nostrils. She loathed and cursed the *wo-jên*, those "rascally dwarfs the Japanese," most of all "human vermin"; next to the Japanese all Westerns. The girl who was playing with the big "snow-ball" was her spoiled pet; the little tawny dog was her master. She saw Drew before any of the others did, and her old eyes threw him a flash of venom. But she waited to hear the explanation of the outrage of his presence before she bade the servitors chastise and eject him; for she trusted Yo Ya-ling and Yo Ya-ling's judgment as she did nothing else that lived now, and she waited silently and patiently. Life had taught her patience, embalmed her with deliberation, as it does few of us—does none who are not great of mind, strong of character, steeled of will. She was arrogant always—never vain.

She would know in a moment. When she knew, she would do.

But it was to her father that Miss Yo spoke. Such

was Chinese etiquette, and no breach of etiquette was brooked in the courtyard of Yo Z'in Tö.

"Father," she said in English, and at her voice Yo looked up from his book. "This is Ki's friend, Mr. Drew, Mr. Tom Drew."

If Yo Z'in Tö knew no other English, she knew that name.

With a cry half anguished for her beloved dead, half ecstasy at a god's presence, Yo Z'in Tö tottered to her feet; her upheld hand hushed the courtyard instruments on an unfinished note; pipe, azalea, fish, shattered bowl, amazed dog lay under an upturned table; and the grandame of the Yos tottered across the marble flagstones of the grassy courtyard's zig-zag path, thrusting Yo and Yo's outstretched hand aside; threw herself sobbing at Tom Drew's shoe; prostrated herself before the aghast New Yorker as she never had to a god or at the footstool of Tze-Hsi.

Twice she rose, twice again she *kot'owed* to the ground; and as she did it all the others did it, too—Miss Yo a little stiffly because of her encasement of English garments.

Yo Ya-ling knew, what none of the others suspected, that those abject Chinese obeisances of ceremony would embarrass Drew cruelly, make him feel ridiculous—even anger him perhaps; but she dared not fail to do as her grandmother did. But as she bent, then rose, she threw Tom Drew a glint of apology that was an attempted explanation, too, from her gentle, merry eyes.

Tom bowed to the old lady awkwardly and heaved a troubled sigh. Madame Yo snapped a word of command that cut across the courtyard like the spit of a fire-cracker. The well-trained Chinese faces of the

watching servitors looked as nearly astonished as Chinese servant-faces ever did in the presence of Yo Z'in Tö; just a breath of consternation touched the music group; and then they obeyed: drum, flute, *kin*, bells, viol and gong throated up through the sun-drunk air the great Hail Song—the song of Imperial welcome to Imperial guest, never given but to greatness on great occasion, almost never heard now in these years of China's shame and turmoil. Only once before in the lifetime of Yo had it belched through his gardens; never since the Manchu fell had it been heard in the Sacred Province—except now and then when some loyal lute had whispered it timidly far behind thrice-barred gates. But the Yo musicians had been well drilled in the classic musics of China. Just one startled breath they waited, and then they played.

Dozens of dark slant-slit eyes filled with tears. Every head was bowed in reverence—except the scant white-haired head of a tiny old woman and the fair head of a horrified American man. Even the five musicians bent obeisance over their twisted carved and painted instruments. The red peonies deepened to black; the pink and lemon peonies darkened toward red and chrome; the wistarias trembled blossoms and lace-cut foliage; ten hundred roses throbbed; the lilies—tiny ones and ones man-tall—shook their waxen heads; the pinks belched out a spicier sweetness in the brazen shock of the music. The persimmon trees flung their tomato-like baubles of fruit wide in time and rhythm. The pampas grasses quivered; violets shivered and shrank into their leaf coverlets. The birds that had twittered in the almond trees were dumb and motionless. The great blazing day star swept nearer. The music grew louder, wilder; the

courtyard rocked to the imperial impact of *Welcome to Royalty.*

Drew crimsoned—red as the reddest peony there; fumbled his coat; was appalled and wroth. He'd never heard such a thunder and turmoil of discord in his life! His feet were pins and needles; there was gooseflesh on his back. The tiny old woman stood erect, motionless as some gray-clad tawny old ivory, and her old eyes flashed into his—the eyes of a hawk in love.

CHAPTER IX

EVEN Chinese music, with its endless repeats, its unconscionable reiterations, comes to an end at last. And the classic imperial hymns are Chinese music at its mightiest and shortest. Again and again the recurrent motif of loyalty and proud acclaim rose and swelled; belched beyond the tree-tops; beat the air and tore it to shreds; rose and screamed; thundered, rolled and fell. The flute shrilled to heaven; splintered the air it cried to; the groan of drum and viol churned the earth—again, again and again. And then, with a lingering plaintive sweetness that whispered away to catch itself back on one mighty burst, the music poised and rested on one imperious, magnificent note—and ended in frozen silence.

Not a head was lifted till then.

Yo held out his hand. The recent years of China's upheaval had told him something of European manners, and, too, Ya-ling had drilled and tutored him. He spoke—in English—not such English as his daughter's, but it served. "It honors our degraded miserable house,

O most distinguished Sir, that you deign us your illustrious presence,'' he said slowly, choosing his words one by one, pronouncing them with careful difficulty.

''Delighted to meet you,'' Tom lied in red confusion.

Yo presented his wife. She bowed and bowed, giggled softly and looked up at Tom with frank affection. ''Well-come you,'' was all the English she attempted.

Great Scott! did they all chatter in some sort of English, these funny, dressed-up, fancy-ball artists?

Yo bowed very low before his mother and introduced her and Drew with very great ceremony—a few words of labored English to Drew, a great many words of Chinese to the old lady. Tom bowed and grinned sheepishly. Madame Yo broke into a torrent of speech, gurgled with quick, half-suppressed sobs, accented with shrill flute-like cries poignant and thin. Her speaking seemed to him longer than the ''Barnum concert'' had, and the fury and noise of it made his very eyelids blink and tremble; but what really unmanned him was, that while she harangued him, the little old woman, tiptoeing up on her ridiculous bedizened fragments of feet that she might reach her face nearer to his, fondled his coat sleeves with her tiny bird-claw hands.

After each long stretch of her turbulent talk—to which all the others listened with bated obsequious breath—she turned her face with a motion of command to Yo Ya-ling; and the girl translated—modified, too—what her grandmother had said. Even so modified and deleted, it made Drew's close-cropped fair curly hair rise on end. He had never been called such things before—and he didn't like it. What would the chaps in New York say—and what wouldn't the girls he knew say—if it ever reached them that a scream of an old Chinese

woman had called him a "rose of jasmine breath," "jade of heaven," adored him, held him the babe of her milk, the priceless jewel of her unworthy womb?

Madame Yo beckoned the younger girl, the butterfly-like, painted beauty. So! he was going to be introduced to the concubine, was he, introduced to Yo's "hand-maiden" by Yo's mother! His soul blushed—good, sterling thing of New York State that it was—to think of what *his* mother would feel could she know of it. Thank heaven she never need know, and he'd see that she never did!

He eyed the lovely painted thing—noncommitally; at least he hoped so.

The girl eyed him—indifferently.

When Miss Yo, still the interpreter, made him understand that the younger girl was her sister (presumably as honorably born as she), Tom Drew's heart gave a sudden thump.

He was glad. Such loveliness had a right to be pure. And he'd give a lot to see her with her face washed. He'd no doubt she'd be even prettier so—if it were miracle possible that human loveliness could be lovelier than this as it was!

As soon as their vociferous expressions of welcome abated a little—for even Yo's dignified courtly welcome and his little wife's purring welcome were vociferous and emotional, and only the exquisite younger girl's seemed perfunctory and daintily cold—Drew played for escape.

But he did not accomplish that for three terrible hours, and, when he did, its way was even worse than all that had gone before it.

They held him fast—stuck tight as a fly in a saucer of treacle—with their gratitude. They had adopted him!

The son of the heart of the House of Yo! They brought him cushions, and thrust him down upon them. They cajoled and acclaimed and worshiped; they enthroned and beatified. The old lady tried to remove his dust-thick shoes, that his weary feet might be rested and soothed—and, he feared, bathed; bathed by the hands and the tears of old Mrs. Yo. Perhaps Miss Yo feared it, too, and knew—from her English sojourn—what an embarrassment and enormity such a detail of hospitality and gratitude would be to the American; for she intervened in suppliant Chinese, and the old woman—not too cheerfully—desisted after she had wiped and wiped again Tom Drew's deplorable shoes with her long shabby dove-colored sleeves. She took him by the hand, led him toward the lily tank, and pulled and pushed him down upon the softest of the many cushions piled there, a nest so soft and down-like that Drew in his astonishment and discomfiture almost sprawled full length on his back—and some one giggled cautiously but unmistakably as he recovered his balance as nearly as he could. He had little doubt from whose little mouth that maddening tinkle of silver mirth had come. The bitterest experience of his boyhood had been sleeping—or trying to sleep—in a New England grandmother's bed. But that had been torment in private. This was torture in public. And trying to sit with composure and dignity on a bed of feathers was more difficult than lying on one alone and unseen in the dark. These awful Chinese! No wonder the virile if tiny Japs downed them every time. No wonder the truculent Germans had crushed them like worms in the soil of Shantung. And people who sat on feathers!

The Chinese do not do that. Stone seats are their

commonest garden furniture, hard benches and chairs and stools of wood what they sit on in their most luxurious houses. It was the babies' "safe place" to which Madame Yo had propelled Tom Drew. There were no babies here to-day, but often there were: brought from the quarters of the servants and concubines to take their ease on the hill of down while old Mrs. Yo watched and studied them, pondering which were worth keeping and which might, with advantage to the prestige of the Clan of Yo, be given in adoption. Madame Yo believed in pruning and weeding out families of distinction as gardeners do flowers and gardens of price.

They gathered about him—the Yos, very close, the servitors slowly coming nearer and nearer—and pelted him with questions, smothered him with their infernal Chink gratitude. He had befriended Yo Ki, the idol of their house. Every hour of Yo Ki's absence was sacrosanct to them; they entreated Mr. Drew to recount to them every moment of those hours.

But they did him one good turn. They brought him food and drink. And Drew was famished and parched. He had left his sandwiches and his flask somewhere—he'd no idea where. He was glad to eat and drink. But most of the food they offered was strange to him, and to balance not only himself but innumerable bowls of odd and weird comestibles on billowing hillocks of feathers was difficult. They brought him enough for a dozen. And to eat alone, while one hundred Chinese eyes watched and admired and half a dozen Yos urged and served, proffering this, pressing that, crying out—in words he could not understand, in tones and gestures he could—that he ate nothing, that he despised their disgusting food, that their putrid wines revolted him, was

trying. And when old lady Yo knelt down beside him and fed him tit-bits with one of her hands, caressing his coat with her other, Tom Drew, as he afterwards wrote his mother, pretty nearly died.

He ate—hunger eats under the direst circumstances—he ate well. At the time he had little sense of taste, but his appetite knew that it was delicious food they gave him, if he did not; and afterwards he remembered that it had been, for he told Swift and the Rutherford-Carmichaels so.

But at long last he succeeded in wrenching himself away, while they bewailed and debarred about him.

They saw him to the outer gate, all of them: not the gate he had wandered through, but the principal gate in the wall—a great battlemented gateway surmounted by two tent-shaped roofs. At the gate an obsequious servant led a barbarically caparisoned palfrey towards him, and eight others approached him with a silk-curtained palanquin. The stables and stableyard were in a distant corner of the princely estate; but always, just inside the great gate lodge of such a Chinese home as this, horses saddled and ready must wait, day and night, lest any gentleman of the house or any honored guest should wish to ride or to journey so beyond the park.

Would he deign to ride her father's miserable best horse, or deign to ride in her dejected father's moth-devoured, vermin-riddled, shabby, paintless, ragged best chair? Miss Yo asked him this sedately, bending before him, but with a small twinkle in her eyes as she shot up a soft look at him.

Tom protested—almost piteously—but protested in vain. They would not let him walk, and they would

not let him go unattended. They pressed about him wildly, closer and closer, shrill and shriller. Madame Yo lifted up her hands to heaven, and her voice with her hands. Yo besought him gravely. Mrs. Yo besought him softly. The incomparable savior of the honor of the House of Yo, go from the gate of Yo unattended, on foot, like a strolling story-teller, or some despised dependent! The very servants were pained. The Yos were inconsolable—and adamant. And they were fifty and more Chinese to one American. The courtyard fifty had swollen to nigh an hundred; for outdoor servants, stable servitors and liveried chair-men had joined his vociferous, gesticulating cortège. Nearly an hundred Chinese to one American! Drew rode.

He rode in the begilt and tapestried Chair of State of the Head of the Clan of Yo. With anguish he allowed himself to be assisted into it tenderly and reposed against its rich embroidered and perfumed cushions. More than once before this Tom Drew had felt a fool. Most of us occasionally do during our earthly pilgrimage. But never before had he known what a fool-fool a free-born American citizen could feel. He was excruciated. His sole alleviation was that this was the Chinese wilderness and not Broadway or Fifth Avenue. Only that could have added to his intense discomfort. He was maudlin with embarrassment.

He—Tom Drew—to be carried like a baby in a basinette, surrounded by a gibbering Chinese motley through miles of China!

The palfrey was led behind him, on the chance that he might choose presently to change his mode of progress. *That* he wouldn't! One hard look at that Chinese "best horse" had been enough for Tom. It was hung with

bells and draperies, and studded with gaily-dyed feather dusters, down-hung ones and inverted upstanding ones. The high Chinese saddle, made of costly wood painted with parrots, peonies and classic love-scenes, also was hung with bells as was the steed's proudly arched neck —that all might know the approach of a high and puissant lord and, hearing, make humble way for him. Come what might—and Drew was quakingly prepared for almost anything now—he never would perch himself atop of that bedecorated animal and its tall pagoda-shaped, painted, bell-hung saddle.

He was prepared for almost anything: clammy with anticipation that Madame Yo herself and a collection of the painted singing-girls would accompany him. For he had no comforting illusion that he was to return unaccompanied to the chummery. Heaven grant that the other fellows were out when he got there! Heaven once let him get out of this—*a première danseuse* in this unspeakable opera-bouffe-circus!—and he'd see that he never got caught in it again. Not if he walked to Hong Kong and swam to Colombo.

But the ladies did not go with him beyond the outer gate.

Yo Ya-ling gave him her hand frankly; Madame Yo bemoaned and caressed; Mrs. Yo pressed her hands against his face; Yo Su looked at him in stony mockery when she had *kot'owed* at his going, and the tiny yellow head that peeped out from her sleeve yapped at him angrily; but they and all their women let him go without them, leave them behind him. That was something.

Yo walked beside him, wobbling a little, as if not much accustomed to walking. Clansmen and retainers went before and behind him. They trumpeted and

drummed him. Snake-like, swallow-tailed banners fluttered in front of him and in the awful procession's prolonged rear. And there was "music"—other music supplementing drums, trumpets and bells. Every few minutes they let off ear-splitting fire-crackers, to keep ill-dragons and evil-spirits from his jade-like progress; but how was Tom Drew of New York City to know that! Never again would he participate in the gunpowder details of any July's glorious Fourth; he swore it! They carried umbrellas in his honor, great bedizened ones of paper and tiny beflowered, birded and bedragoned ones of silk. They fanned him, they gave *him* a fan about the size of a lily-leaf. They wrapped his feet in lynx fur. They burnt great bunches of incense-sticks to delight his distinguished nostrils, as they went. He'd destroy every joss-stick in New York, if he ever got back there! And he would get back there—he'd get back there quick.

They carried lanterns about him: great pendulous balls of crinkled paper and gaudy silk, cubes of thin decorated glass and porcelain, hanging from long, quivering bamboos—unlit Chinese lanterns, for the long Shantung day was not done yet; the vivid Chinese daylight still lasted. Drew would have welcomed darkness.

And they did not take him, as he'd come, through lonely woodland passes. They bore him, angry and blushing, on the highroad. Peasants peered up from their work, out from their huts—some to forsake honest toil and join, a rabble chattering following, in the great, augmenting processional. Children! Not less than a thousand children—as Tom counted them—rushed upon them, and clung to them. From every byway and shrub, from every ditch and crevice, some Chinese sprang and

followed, single naked spies, whole battalions. Drew ached for a revolver, ached for a readier, glibber use of the Shantung vernacular.

All China came out and looked at him, and now and then they passed Europeans. Drew had not believed that there were so many white men in Asia.

He slunk further and further back into his becurtained palanquin. Yo enquired tenderly if he were fatigued, his exquisite body jolted, and bade the bearers set down the chair that the lord of all the West might rest.

Drew attempted to get out and walk.

Yo would not permit it.

Tom explained that he was cramped, must stretch his legs.

Yo went down in the dust beside the chair now resting on the ground and began to massage Drew's arms and legs with murmured words of honeyed sympathy and sorrow. Quite a number of the retainers followed Yo's example.

Drew's cramp had gone. And he said so.

Their jewel-like, august lord was too considerate of his worms; they would rub his jade-like, flower-like legs until the flesh fell from their fingers. They proceeded to do it.

At last Drew convinced Yo that he had had enough, and again they lifted him up shoulder-high and plodded on again through the swelling throng. Peasant women had "joined-up" now, blue-clad, bright-eyed creatures, many with papoose-like babies slung across the mothers' sturdy backs; shrill, exclamatory women who shouted and commented as they darted back and forth as near him as the ruthless whips of the Yo servants would let them come. It was pandemonium now—only Yo him-

self suave and unperturbed, courteous, courtly, dignified and cordial. A Chinese rabble does not affect a Chinese gentleman. His whippers-off take notice of it, deal with it for him.

It was more than an hour's march from Yo's garden gate to the chummery verandah, by the highroad short-cut that the bannermen leaders had brought them. Louder, thicker, more pressing grew the rabble. The music-makers, the fire-cracker throwers, made a splendid spurt. They were almost there. The day was going in a gorgeous burst of vivid sunset—lighter than midday.

They laid Drew's splendid chair down reverently, lifted him by his arm-pits from the cushions; and Pilkington and Burton and Walter Swift and the Rutherford-Carmichaels leant over the verandah railing, watching it with unveiled interest.

CHAPTER X

DREW would have given all his patrimony to have escaped that moment; but American breeding has its standards, and Powers Drew's son was a thoroughbred.

He bowed to Lady Rutherford-Carmichael—he could not remove the hat he'd lost—nodded to the men on the verandah, and turning to Yo thanked him nicely, even urged him to come in for rest and refreshment after the long, hot tramp. The elderly Chinese, sedentary of life as he was, had refused sturdily to ride in chair or on horseback for any of their journey, but had padded on stanchly in obvious attendance upon his guest, his son's friend and benefactor, his fine yellow hand clasped

affectionately on the edge of Drew's chair—while a second sedan chair was carried empty behind it: Yo's second best chair.

Yo would not come in—but he took a long time saying so. Chinese poetry is brevity briefened. Chinese conversation is the longest, most roundabout, reiterated of all spoken speech. Yo lingered and bowed, bowed and lingered, said a very little that Drew understood and a very great deal that Drew did not understand at all. He bent to the ground; he held his clasped hands to his heart; he fluttered his fan—and lingered. After a very long time he went—went still on foot backwards until out of sight—and went with a fervent promise, not one word of which Tom caught—but Walter Swift understood it all—a promise that he would return on an auspicious and to him radiant occasion to visit, here in the distinguished and cherished friend's estimable, palace-like dwelling, his eminent, faultless friend, the one perfect jade of all mankind.

Tom faced the music and went up to the verandah. Burton and Pilkington were rocking in glee; Aline was bubbling with mirth; and for once there was a broad smile on Lord Giggles' face. But Walter Swift, standing behind Lady Rutherford, was not amused; he regarded Drew gravely, but his eyes were brimming with pleasure.

"By Jove, I congratulate you, Drew! You have done something in a day that I have not been able to do in all my sixteen years in China. Your father ought to quadruple your allowance. I bet he does. You have done a great thing for him this day. Washington and Westminster would like you in their service, if they knew what we have just seen."

Tom stared at his friend. Was old Walter trying to get his goat? It didn't sound like it, and it was no habit of Walter Swift's. But, if not, Swift must have gone crazy. Well, that could wait. He wanted a tub and a long cool drink—he needed them both—if Lady Rutherford-Carmichael would excuse him for a very few moments. It was awfully kind of her to have come, but he wasn't fit to shake hands with her until he had changed. He'd be quick.

And he was.

When he came back Pilkington and Burton—two of the three men he was chumming with out here in the wilderness—had obligingly taken themselves off, and his three visitors were gathered close together, discussing something in low voices gravely. "Giggles" no longer was smiling; even Aline was serious and quiet; and Tom to his surprise—another surprise in this long day of amazements—saw a new look of respect in all their faces as they turned toward him where he joined them.

"I don't know whether you are the sharpest or the luckiest man that ever came out of New York State," Swift greeted him; "but one of the two you assuredly are."

Tom looked at them suspiciously. This was not the teasing he'd expected. But, no, they were not teasing.

"Look here," he demanded, as he took the seat near hers to which Lady Rutherford-Carmichael signaled him, "I don't know what you are talking about, Mr. Swift. Sharp! Lucky! I've had a terrible day. I'm going back to New York on the first decent boat."

"I think not," the older American said gently. "Young man, do you know who that Chinese gentleman is who walked—walked!—beside your chair (no white

man ever was carried in that chair before, I'll go surety) and parted from you as if you'd been a lineal descendant of the Sage himself? Do you?"

"Can't say I do—not particularly. Pleasant old boy though, bar his petticoats, and it might be said that I ought to know who he is; for I've spent most of to-day at his place, hob-nobbing with him and his—his relatives. His name is Yo, and he's got rather a dandy crib a mile or so north of here, if you like Chinesey places, which I don't. The old-boy-in-petticoats' name is Yo—at least, I suppose it is; his daughter told me so."

"You have been inside Yo Wing So's gates, spoken with one of his daughters?" Swift spoke very slowly, almost as if to cover emotion.

"With both of them," Drew asserted.—"Will you pour it, please, Lady Rutherford?"—for the boys had brought and placed tea.—"But, I can't claim," he went on as Aline nodded, "that the Chinese one had much to say to me—*she* wasn't exactly chummy."

"Both Yo Wing So's daughters are Chinese, man," Walter Swift said severely.

"Yes, I know," Tom agreed. "But one of them dresses the part, and one doesn't."

"Miss Yo, the older one, wears European clothes sometimes," Swift said, "not always. She was educated in England."

"I see," Rutherford-Carmichael said, "you met Miss Yo in England when she was at school there, and she introduced you to her father."

"She did that all right. But I never laid my eyes on her until to-day."

"And she let you talk to her and introduced you to her father? And he did not turn you out. And I,"

the woman exclaimed, "have been *trying* to get to know Miss Yo ever since we came to Shantung, and I couldn't pull it off!"

"You wanted to know her? Why, I thought you rather wanted *not* to know any Chinese!"

"I wanted to know her very much indeed."

Tom looked the question he did not care to ask.

"Because Giggles would give anything to get on good terms with her father," she answered.

"Oh!" Drew murmured feebly.

"Yo is very powerful here," the Englishman explained. "He can pull any string—any Chinese string—he cares to in Shantung. and I am not sure that he does not largely control a mine interest that I am anxious to get hold of for a little syndicate that a few friends of mine at home and I own."

"I've got some shares, Giggles," his wife reminded him.

"You have. And probably you'll pocket mine too."

Aline nodded pleasantly.

"You know I'm over here on gold-mine business," her husband reminded Drew. "And—in confidence—I am here too on a very much more important matter: something that Whitehall wants to find out about, and Yo Wing So could tell me—if he would."

"So he's a politician! He doesn't look it!"

"The ablest politicians don't, especially in China," Swift said; "but Yo is not in the least interested in politics. He can tell, or find out, anything Rutherford wants to know—no doubt of that. But he cares nothing for politics as politics; one reason, perhaps the chief reason, why he is trusted by the Chinese wire-pullers very much more than any of them trust each other. He

is a patriot, but his attitude in even that is Taoist: let things slide. And he's easygoing, almost indifferent, cheerfully willing to see Young China tried out. He believes that what will be, will be, and he wishes it luck. He cares more for a fine piece of Ming or a silk of Ma Yuan's—he's got three, lucky beggar!—than he does for all the shifting sands of Asiatic politics. This present shindy seems a big thing to you and me, Tom; but nine tenths of the Chinese never heard of it, and nine tenths of the tenth that have don't care. They are a placid people, when they are permitted to be. And the immensity of China, its barriers of mountains and rivers, its impossible roads and no roads at all secure it to most of the four hundred million of them, isolate them in the peace they prize. We hear a great deal of changeless China. That's sheer nonsense, as most everything is that America and Europe hear of China. No country on our globe has more changes than China has. Forms of government come and go like April showers. But the Chinese people are changeless. Pekin upheavals never reach very far beyond its walls, and those in the treaty ports directly interested. China is a Country. The Chinese are not a nation. They are a scattered multitude of families, loosely but warmly—and, I believe, permanently—united by common obsessions, common beliefs, common tastes, dislikes, likes and manners and methods, fealties and antagonisms; *common,* mind you, not mutual; devoted to and dependent upon the same things, but not devoted to or dependent upon each other. The great majority of them are only vaguely conscious, if conscious at all, that there is anything or any one outside their own village or estate and the wild place about it, except a supreme half-man, half-god called the Son of

Heaven in a sacred, fabulous, remote place called the forbidden city of Pekin where trees of gold and silver grow, where the lakes are of hyacinth perfume and filled with red fish, where black swans have jeweled feet and beaks and sing more sweetly than nightingales. They look up to that forbidden city very much as we do to Heaven, and have about as much practical conviction of its material, succinct, concrete existence as we have of Heaven's. Nothing means much to them; little touches them, except their own family affairs. Dynasties come and go; wars flare up and pass; and they neither know nor care. 'Frisco has an extra big earthquake, and inside an hour women in Chicago, New York, Manchester, London and Lisbon are packing hampers of food and clothes and men are writing cheques. Let the Earth swallow Foochow up to-morrow, and Yunan never will know it has happened. Sash-wearers, educated men like Yo Wing So, hear a little more of outside things—some of them—but few of them care much more. Nine times out of ten a Chinese girl when she marries is lost to her father's family, and by the time her third baby is born she has forgotten the language of her father's province, if not its very name. China is a Continent and an island of close-locked clan interests—clans dead to all others. It *looks* different now. The attempts upon Manchuria quivered the giant a trifle, pricked the great dragon on two or three of the most sensitive of its billion scales; then the World War came and the Shantung Question. Whispers of the War reached the edge of China. The Shantung Question has quick-silvered through many of her thousand veins, for Shantung *belongs* to every Chinese—the sacred province where the crystal tree grows, where K'ung-tszze was born, where his grave is en-

shrined. I am not sure that the Shantung Question will not wake the dragon up; if so, look out! Certainly it looks now as if not only China but the Chinese were changing at last. They are—on the surface—some of them. It may last, republic and all. I think not; but we shall see. I wouldn't bet a hundred dollars even money either way—not for the next twenty or thirty years. But, in the long run, I'd back the grave of Confucius against the League of Nations ten thousand to nothing. They are wonderfully and excruciatingly Western now, some of the Chinese—especially the women—that we see at the treaty ports. But most of them wear our clothes and our ways very much as Ophelia advised Gertrude to wear her rue—with a difference."

"They do," Giggles agreed. "I saw one yesterday—took a good long look at it too—that I couldn't make up my mind about, whether it was a man or a woman, and I haven't yet."

"Miss Yo was perfectly dressed—English-fashion," Drew remarked.

"She always is—when she wears them at all—Western clothes," Swift stated. "The Yos are thoroughbreds. What they do they do properly. For some reason, I don't know what, Yo and his mother, who runs the show, decided to send a boy to America and a girl to England to school. Miss Yo, the girl, wears here what she wore there, often, not always. Yo and his wife, too, dress in our fashion now and then. I can't imagine why she ever does. I think he is genuinely willing to see the new ways of young China tried out fairly—the little he cares about such things at all. Lord! I wish I'd been in your shoes to-day, Drew. What wouldn't I give to see Yo Wing

So's treasures! And I'd give a thousand dollars—more—good U. S. A. ones—for one of his fans."

"His fans! What's wonderful about the old boy's fans? My governor has paid some stiff prices for fans of Mother's and Molly's; but I don't think he'd go to a thousand."

"Yo's fans are not for sale in New York," Swift asserted. "If they were, few would realize how priceless they are. Yo Wing So paints the most beautiful fans that ever were painted. A thousand dollars! I'd give fifteen hundred for the pick of Yo's fans—and my capital is less than a year of your father's income—and I'd give a hundred dollars just to see the fans and look my full at them."

Drew was disgusted. "Do you mean to tell me that old Petticoats makes his living painting Cupids and roses and gimcracks on fans? All those servants and houses and park and clothes and things paid for by one old Chinese painting toy fans!"

"Yo Wing So's fans are not toys," Walter Swift rebuked; "they are exquisite works of art—supreme ones. His silks are too. Yo Wing So is the greatest living Chinese painter. But he sells nothing. He sometimes gives a friend a fan, but he never has sold one—or anything else. Yo Wing So buys, he never sells."

"Bulls the market." Drew was still disgusted. He could by no manner of means regard fans and petticoats as manly. He never had thought too much of an artist friend or two of his mother's and sister's: velvet jackets, too much hair, Frenchified beards, plenty of rings, flowing neckties, and all the rest of it. But a Chinaman painter fellow—old enough to know better, even if he

was a Chinaman, and who dawdled over fans! Fans "works of art" indeed! Dear old Walter couldn't feed him that brand of dope.

"'Market' means nothing to Yo Wing So," Swift said sternly. "He is a dreamer, an observer, an acute thinker who rarely gives his thought to what he regards as trivial. He is a very great man. The Yos are a wonderful family—as are most of the great Chinese families. But no other Clan of to-day can boast a Yo Wing So. Even China's Art—at its finest the very apex of all human art—has deteriorated in the last thirty years and is threatened with decay. The embroideries are not *quite* so beautiful; the ivories not quite so pure; the art workers are not quite so absorbed and selfless. All Chinese art is traditional and is fundamentally different from Western art. God grant that it may yet be preserved from the contaminations of cheapness, mundane clap-trap, commonplace, ignorant popularity. God grant that it may remain "careful," idealistic, and above all Chinese. In all he paints Yo Wing So does just those three great things, united to an exquisite beauty of technique that is his own—and old, imperial China's. An immense world-debt is owed to Yo Wing So!"

Aline Rutherford-Carmichael did not interrupt Walter; but as he paused—perhaps he had said all he meant to—and turned his grave, beautiful eyes from them to the crinkling Chinese sunset, she turned to Drew determinedly. "Now, Mr. Drew, you begin at the beginning and tell us all about it. How you met the girl, what you said to her, what she said to you, *and* how you ever got her to introduce you to her father.

Tell me every bit of it. And mind you begin at the beginning."

Drew, knowing it inevitable, began—lamely—began with his start in the early morning to find, if he could, a "cherry Imperial." No one interrupted him—they all were too intent with interest: Giggles because of gold mines and something that Whitehall wished to learn, Walter Swift because of Ming porcelain lions and incense-burners, *tazzas*, ivories, and painted fans, Aline because of her husband's wish.

Tom Drew was no born raconteur. He made dull work of his story, until he warmed to it. Then:—"They gave me the circus of my little life in that red, pink, green and yellow courtyard place! They played me music. Painted girls, men in heathen vestments, six or seven of 'em up on a platform—all carved and gilded—and of all the rows! You never heard such music!"

Walter Swift probably had, but he said nothing.

"They plunked me down on a feather bed—the old girl did—and then they fed me."

"What old girl?" Swift asked quickly.

"Grandmother, my girl said—the one in sensible clothes. I wish my grandmother could have seen her—the old Chinese lady. Funniest old girl I ever saw. The color of Autumn leaves—brown ones—crinkled like a canteloupe, no teeth, not much hair, Christmas-white what she had of it, shabbiest dress I ever saw—that is, a sack thing with miles of sleeves *and* Turkish trousers, jewelry all she could carry on her hands and her toes—jewelry to make Tiffany's eyes start out of Tiffany's head: just a withered wisp of little old woman, but

spunky! And what she said went! I didn't understand a word she said, but they did."

"What did they give you to eat?" Aline demanded. American still to her ennobled backbone, Lady Giggles was deeply interested in new and striking combinations of food.

Tom shook his head. "What didn't they? It was good food."

"Of course it was," the woman said. "Talk about French cooking or fried chicken in Maryland! I'll never put up with any but a Chinese cook again as long as I live. I'm going to take one home with me, and kitchen-maid and scullery-maid boys. I haven't the flair of China that Walter has, but I adore their cooks. Any people who can teach you and me how peanuts ought to taste! And I never tasted a melon that was a melon until I came to China. Do try to remember what they gave you for lunch."

"It wasn't lunch. At least, I don't suppose it was. Nobody had anything but me. Dozens of doll's bowls, but the food in them was dandy, and laid out, if you please—what the family didn't offer to me on their united knees—laid out on my feather bed for a table. I've no idea what was in those fancy little bowls; but one thing was some sort of vermicelli stuff, and the old lady fed it to me with her fingers."

"Never!"

"Oh, you don't have to believe it, Lady Rutherford; but it happens to be perfectly true."

"Yo Z'in Tö fed you with her own fingers," Swift exclaimed softly. "I shall see Yo Wing So's fans at last. He can introduce you to Miss Yo, Lady Rutherford."

She laid her hand on Drew's eagerly. "Tom, will you? Do you think you can?"

"Most certainly. Name your day and the function: breakfast, garden party, ball? I'll pull it off. I own them—Yos, house, garden and all. Consider the fortress taken, my dear friends. Yo and Yo's are yours to command."

"There is more in this than you've told us," his countrywoman insisted shrewdly. "You've left something out. What is it? I am going to know. There was more reason behind such a welcome than your just walking into Yo's garden, and saying 'How' to his daughter."

Swift nodded eagerly.

"Better tell her at once," her husband advised, "it will save time."

Tom realized that. "I knew Yo's son at Harvard."

"More than that!" Swift prompted.

"It wasn't anything," Drew grumbled. "He was going to be expelled, for something that I happened to know he hadn't done. Naturally I butted in. Any one would; it wasn't anything."

"You saved Yo Wing So's only son from expulsion!" Walter Swift whispered. "Yes, our dear young friend can introduce us to all the Yos: make us free of the garden, the courtyards and the ko'tang. Own Yo and Yo's homestead! Tom Bradley Drew, you own Shantung—what the Huns and the Japs have left of it!"

CHAPTER XI

ALONE on the chummery verandah after dinner, braced with coffee, soothed with tobacco, Drew could grin contentedly at the day's rasping alarms.

The three staunch friends of his Shantung stay had been unmistakably delighted, and here was a chance to do something for them who had been so tireless in showing him kindness and friendship. He was glad of that. He'd take good care that he never again took the chief rôle in a Chinese procession; but he'd not make a bolt for New York just yet. He'd go on knowing the Yos for a bit, if only to please Mrs. Giggles and dear old Walter—and Giggles himself. They'd all been so awfully decent to him, kept him contented and at home! If to hob-nob with the Yos was what they wanted, he'd bring it about—a small enough instalment on the debt he owed them. Swift should look at the fans—rum idea that—perhaps he could get a fan for him; why not? He'd like to do that. After all he wasn't sorry he'd barged into that queer old garden. Miss Yo wasn't bad; her sister was the prettiest thing ever he'd seen; and the others had meant well, no doubt about it. That courtyard experience had been rather awful: the worst time he'd ever had. But perhaps it wouldn't be so impossible—when he got more used to it all. What if a few white fools had gaped and grinned as he'd been carried along in Yo's gold and painted cradle! That shouldn't happen again—not on any account. And, if Lady Rutherford wanted to know Miss Yo, she should. Miss Yo had been friendly; he'd cultivate her friendliness. He didn't mind doing that—for Lady Aline.

His thoughts went back to Yo Ki; Yo Ki at Cambridge. Poor home-sick, friendless yellow boy. He wished he'd been a bit friendlier to the poor little cuss. Queer the way he had suddenly thought of Ki—off there in mid-ocean. Very queer! Just a coincidence, of course, but queer.

When Pilkington and Burton came out, with good night "pegs" carried behind them, he answered their renewed chaff good-naturedly, even laughed with them at the figure he'd cut—and patronized them, too—just a little. His status in Shantung had risen, thanks to the Yos. Walter had said so; and Walter knew; but by George, it was funny: Power Drew's son's value as a social and international asset enhanced by a Chinese who painted fans, and used one, and wore petticoats!

But Drew fell asleep thinking not unkindly of China, and more interested, if patronizingly interested, in her amazing people than he, as a true-born American citizen, could have credited a few hours ago.

The Chinese are preposterously early risers—all of them.

The four men of the chummery were not lie-abeds. None of us are in the East. But they did not invariably wake at dawn.

To-day they did.

A loud, long and increasing noise awoke them.

"Damned Manchu wedding," Pilkington grunted, and he turned over and tried, in vain, to sleep through the boom and din.

Burton consulted his watch by the aid of a match and said something very much worse than Pilkington had.

Algy Brown—sunny souled, philosophical, utilitarian to an admirable degree—got up at once and sought his tub. More sleep was out of the question, and a few hours of solid work before breakfast would be eminently useful.

Tom yawned, wondered lazily if the Boxers were up and doing again, or some other phalanx of bandits, re-

adjusted his pillows more to his liking, and went sound asleep again, as a particularly terrible crash of noise bellowed and split the opal-tinted air of the Chinese day-break. It was said that Powers Drew could take forty winks anywhere, anyhow; even placidly in the midst of Wall Street's most devastating panic. Tom had inherited his father's comfortable and nerves-preserving gift.

Nearer and nearer, louder and louder came the unspeakable, excruciating pandemonium.

"Melican big man get up. Must do. Dless plenty dam quick," Drew's boy insisted five minutes later.

"What the devil for? And where's my tea?"

"No can have," Hing said firmly, jerking off a sheet unceremoniously and propelling Drew's right foot feverishly but dexterously into one of Drew's best silk socks.

"Here, what are you about? I haven't had my bath, and I tell you, bring tea, you heathen, and I don't wear lace underwear in the morning."

"No can wash. No got time." Hing clothed his master as he spoke.

"Look here, Hing, what's up? House on fire? War broke out?"

"No tloubles," the servant said exultantly, as he went rapidly on with Tom's toilet. "Vely gleat honoul. Vely gleat lord come see mastah. Vely gleat old most honolable lady, all same yellow-chair most high Pekin woman. No time make talk. Be quick. Must do—dam quick."

Tom Drew knew *his* master when he met him, another useful quality he had inherited from Powers his elder. He knew—they both did—when to rule and when to yield.

Tom yielded to Hing, wondered what the devil was up, and why on earth he was wearing his smartest evening clothes at stark and tealess daylight.

Propelled and pushed by Hing to the chummery threshold, Tom learned—and saw, as well as heard—what was up.

Yo Wing So had come to return Mr. Drew's visit, and —honor almost unprecedented in China's long social annals—Madame Yo Z'in Tö had come also.

Tom bit his lip. Truly this did seem too much. He remembered Aline, pulled himself together, and went down the verandah steps hospitably. He winced, but he did not flinch.

It was a great sight: the Yos come on a visit of utmost ceremony and compliment. The super-studios of the West's cinema-world would have strained their coffers for this! And it would have bankrupted their combined exchequers. Yesterday's cavalcade had been impromptu, hurriedly arranged. This was the Yos at their best—in state.

Yo Wing So rode his "best horse"; the best horse its best apparel. Madame Yo, bolt upright in her own best chair, no whit less fine than Yo's own, wore her best clothes and more jewels than Tom Drew had ever seen on one woman before. Yo Z'in Tö literally blazed. No dull garments of widowhood clothed Yo Z'in Tö to-day. Her trousers alone had cost, and were worth, hundreds of pounds; her stick-pins would have ransomed a King in medieval Europe's most usurious war.

Except at a summons to Pekin years ago, Madame Yo had never before been outside their own gates since she had been carried through the great gate of ceremony a red-clad bride. When her lord had journeyed on busi-

ness or pleasure she had stayed at home and ruled there in his stead, sending a concubine or two, selected by her, to comfort his loneliness and to garnish his retinue. Even when Yo C'hein Fô had spent several years in his Ho Nan *yamen* his wife had kept her state and his in their Shantung home. To-day she had broken usage—come out—to do honor to Ki's friend. And usage was a god to Yo Z'in Tö. She looked about her curiously, as you and I might at the byways of Mars.

Six servitors—Tom wondered if they were eunuchs—walked with drawn swords beside her chair. A dozen small Chinese boys, over-clad above the waistline (as far as they had waistlines) entirely naked below it, flanked the drawn-sword men. Each bedizened urchin brandished a great spray of exquisite blossoms—longer far than he was—and pungently, insistently fragrant.

There were fifty gift-and-tribute bearers, carrying tiny dwarf trees, singing birds in costly cages, turtles and rose-fed snails (for Drew to eat), furs and embroideries (for Drew to wear), mandarin capes and coats of cut-out-work embroidery, embroidered mandarin petticoats, ivory from Ning Po, brass and bronze, opium boxes, jade amulets from Kokonor, snuff-bottles, red tobacco from far off Lan-chou—and much else—to lay at Tom Drew's feet, to show the love and gratitude that a Yo bore to one who had befriended a Yo.

The American was embarrassed and more worried than embarrassed. How long would these visitors stay? And what was he to do with them? What was he expected to do? But he looked as cordial as he could—not nearly as cordial as he tried to look—and did what he knew his father would have done in his place: passed Yo with a friendly nod, and went at once to Madame

Yo—a breach of Chinese etiquette which was the highest Chinese etiquette and delighted Yo even more than it did the woman, and wrote Drew down in their estimate a sash-wearer too; for in China motherhood out-ranks rank, as age itself does.

The litter was lowered, and Madame Yo pulled herself up and out by Drew's proffered hands, and, beaming like a delighted child—which she was—went up the chummery steps clinging to Tom's arm, which the tiny creature reached with combined difficulty and resolution and could not have reached at all if Tom had not bent, for her convenience, nearly double. Yo Z'in Tö had never taken a man's arm before, and she giggled with pleasure as they went, she tottering on her atoms of feet, the Harvard athlete mincing painfully beside her with the shortest steps his feet had ever taken since they'd learned to walk.

And Yo, left to scramble and tumble off his high perch on his high horse as best he could via the outstretched arms and shoulders of his grooms, followed his mother and Ki's revered and perturbed benefactor into the little chummery. And as many retainers as could squeeze in after him did. The rest swarmed the verandah, and others held an overflow meeting, placidly squatted on the ground about, and pulled out their long-stemmed pipes.

Algy Brown, leaning from his bedroom window, almost lost his balance and crashed down on Madame Yo as she progressed up the steps on Drew's arm. Drew saw him and the expression on his face and recorded a pious hope that he would fall out and break his neck. But Brown didn't quite do it; and he was more generous than Tom: he had seen Drew's face as clearly as Drew

had seen his, and, much as he longed to join the "performance downstairs," he not only did not, but he prevented Pilkington and Burton from doing so, either. The three Englishmen breakfasted meekly on biscuits and such other oddments as they could find for themselves; the chummery servants would take no notice at all of mere Englishmen while Yo Wing So was here. But Tom Drew might have found the three British useful, had they thrust themselves into it; for they all had been in China longer than he had and knew more of its tongue and customs.

If Mr. Drew did not know what to do with his unexpected guests, Hing did, and did it nobly.

Tom gave them breakfast—he thought of that himself—it seemed obvious to him that, when in such doubt as he was in, a good square meal was the best card he could lead. But it was Hing almost as much as the Yos' great good-humor that made the meal a smooth and happy function. Hing had no sharks' fins or birds' nests to offer—the chummery larder did not run to either; but on the whole he did wonders, and Madame Yo quite took to bacon and eggs, which Hing took the precaution to have well dashed with *soy* in the cook-house. It was out of the question for him to put eggs palpably new-laid before a great Chinese lady; it isn't done in China. But the *soy* covered the eggs' youthful insipidity. Knives and forks Madame Yo would have none of, but Yo plied both after a fashion. Madame Yo made shift with a spoon, until Hing produced a pair of chopsticks and his oath by the tomb of his mother that they were virgin. Madame scrutinized them, called for boiling water, washed them, dried them on the table cloth, and went on with her breakfast heartily. Tom found it

fascinating to see Yo Z'in Tö eating bacon and eggs with chopsticks. She reassumed her spoon when Hing brought breakfast to sparkling climax and close with generous bowls of soup of candied crab-apples floating in vintage champagne.

Drew wondered how soon after breakfast they'd go.

Not for a long time.

And it is possible that they'd have been there now, if Hing had not after the long lapse of time he deemed suitable brought in the guest-tea. That sent them off —as nearly post-haste as well-bred Chinese guests ever make departure. They had to go then; for in China it is the host who is intruded upon, and not those who intrude on him, that determines how long he shall suffer the intrusion: a custom of which Drew had not heard. It has its advantages, as do several other Chinese customs.

CHAPTER XII

TORU OSURO was handsome, when distemper did not make his face repulsively hideous; sometimes he was beautiful. He was beautiful now, as he sat in his "study" dreaming of the plum blossoms blooming at the edge of Kyoto. He loved his country, and he sincerely loved beauty. No matter how urgent the day's business, no matter how long and tangled the nights, always once between midnight and midnight Toru Osuro kept an hour's tender tryst with his homeland: he lived for Japan, and for Toru Osuro—whom he held one of her best assets, a citizen destined to wealth, place, power and fame. If his love of his country was not selfless, per-

haps only the patriotism of great souls and of pure ones is; and if the time should come when he had to decide between Japan's prosperity and his own, it might be rash to say which he would sacrifice to the other. He was not the demi-god that many (including one Chinese girl) thought him; but there are thousands of worse men than Toru Osuro—in Japan.

A gentleman long and finely-bred, Osuro was an adventurer cold and ruthless. He worshiped beauty—lived for it in his happiest moments; he loathed the Chinese and secretly feared them. His heart's desire was to despoil Shantung, filch or destroy her treasure, trick and degrade her people—but he did it for Japan. There was but one thing in Shantung he would spare, if he could, at least for a time. A parchment lay spread out before him, a very nearly perfect plan of a mine he had been sent here to buy. Osuro had not been able to buy one foot of it yet. The Chinese owners would be neither cajoled, tricked nor badgered into selling. Unless they sold soon, he would destroy it—and its Chinese owners with it; Toru Osuro vowed this, as he had done every day since he had had his house built as near the great undeveloped mine as he had contrived to secure a site. He vowed it again, his face twisted with the passion of lustful ambition and thwarted patriotism, as he folded up the parchment and locked it away. Germany had gone; Japan had come to stay!

Then again he fell a-dreaming, and Osuro's face grew tender. He heard the patter of countless wooden shoes, the pretty patter of baby feet on high clogs. Little gay-faced children were flying bat-kites on a hill path; he was one of them. His lovely mother caressed him; his

father threw him a ball of colored silks; little Toru pattered off sturdily to catch it. The cherry trees were in bloom. The great Fuji rose above the cherry trees; a cloud billow of gold and saffron rested cap-like on her cool whiteness. Temple bells were ringing; girls were singing at their spinning; a blind sweetmeat seller blew "come buy" on his reed flute. His father tossed Toru a coin; Toru bowed profoundly to his father before he clattered off on his little wooden clogs to choose between the pink sweetmeats and the white ones on the blind man's tray. Toru liked best the white ones. He bought only pink ones. Toru's pretty little mother liked best the cinnamon-flavored pink ones.

Osuro's eyes filled with tears as he remembered, and the man's mouth was very tender.

Toru Osuro, dreamer and adventurer, was a maddening contradiction. Most Japanese are.

He sighed softly as he glanced up about the room—as Japanese here in alien China as any room in Kyoto. A spray of fragrant almond-blossoms had fallen from its green holder over there on the bamboo bench. Osuro rose and crossed the room and put the almond spray back into the water very tenderly, altering its arrangement, the slant and turn of it, again and again until it was perfect. And when it was, the man bowed to it before he left it and sat down with a book of Japanese poems—gentle little verses as delicate as Japanese prints—each dainty line a picture, most of them tinkling music. Osuro read on lovingly—while he waited—Osuro who, if all went well, would give to flame and slaughter a dozen little thatched peasant huts hidden among almond trees and persimmons—burn and uproot

them while Chinese babies slept with their mothers in the little hut-houses. He would do it for hate's sake, for racial greed and jealousy; do it for Japan.

Osuro read slowly, dwelling on each fragrant verse as on a flower.

He looked up sharply and instantly as another Japanese pushed back a *sogi* and came in quickly. "She comes, Sir."

Osuro's nod was a dismissal; the other went as noiselessly as he had come. His master laid his verse-book away carefully in a drawer he closed, picked up another book from the table, and bent over it intently.

A little yellow hand slid back the outer *sogi* softly; a girlish face peeped in. He was very beautiful, she thought, as she stood and watched him, her slant black eyes softened, all her fear forgotten—for she had been greatly frightened. She always was fearful as she crept through the shadows of the gardens—her great garden, Osuro's little garden, and the short space of woodland that separated them. She knew the risk she was running each time she came. She knew what her father would deal to her, if he knew. She knew, and trembled, and came.

But here with Toru sitting there, Toru waiting for her, fear could not stay with her. No harm could touch her while he was near her. And with him she could think only of him—and of how he loved and craved her. She knew the light that would kindle in his face, the worship in his eyes, the tenderness in his cry of welcome, when her slightest sound told him she had come to him.

A delicate giggle that was all gladness, "Toru," the dark cloak on the floor, and he'd turned and seen her. He had risen with the half-sob cry of rapture her ears

drank as sweet red wine, and the man had reached her, held her close.

For a long moment Osuro did not speak—telling his emotion by his silence: too glad, too grateful to speak.

"Jasmine!" he whispered when silence had done its part. "Brave one! True one! O, flower of my desert, how I have wanted you—how I need you!" He spoke in her tongue. As yet she knew, and spoke haltingly, only the few words he'd taught her of his tongue—the language that would be hers when she had learned it and when he—the hard task that held him here, done—had carried her to safety in the guarded, hidden garden of his palace home at Nikko—a fairer, princelier home than she had ever dreamed of, he told her, their love-nest, place of peace and joy to them forever. There he'd love her always, spoil her. There she'd serve him and rule him, there she'd bear his children—grow into his very soul, be of his very race. So they had planned it. And it would be so.

"But," the girl rebuked him, "you are too greedy, Toru. Not four times has the day star girdled with its sweeping splendor our old ball of earth since I came before. I cannot come always. You must be patient, my lord."

"Nay," the man rebuked in his turn, "I am not that. I am your slave, and well you know it. Ah! I am indeed greedy; for I parch in your absence. I cannot live without you, Jasmine!"

Old words! No doubt Adam spoke them once in Eden when Eve first tempted him with her new-seen loveliness, the claiming wonder of her being—an enmeshing temptation but for which she had been powerless to tempt him to forbidden fruit and undoing. Of

earth's millions, thousands of men are saying it at this moment, in countless places, in every language: saying it uncouthly in mangling peasant utterance, saying it in the gentle's perfecter speech, meaning it, most of them, believing it—while they say it. Ah well, the old, old words—old as life, sex, desire, old as love's greatness, old as man's instinct for the hunt—will never be threadbare, never ring hackneyed while woman is woman, but will last, while we are human: the sweetest sound a woman ever hears. Old words, sweet words, true words, false words, the key that unlocks life's heaven, life's hell: the most potent words man ever speaks—sacramental, fatal.

"To thy throne!" Osuro pleaded, commanded, pulling her gently towards his chair and drawing her onto his knees.

When they spoke again—it was she who did—the girl said, in English now, because her love knew, though he always denied it, that he liked to listen to her so, better than he did to Chinese—and what matter to her what language they spoke, if only they spoke to each other, with only the roses and the dove-flowers at the casement and their own hearts to hear?—"What were you reading, Toru?"

She picked up the book he'd thrown down at her coming, and he smiled at her as she looked at it. Wang Seng-Ju! Why? Your own poets sing more beautifully, do they not?"

"No," the Japanese told her, half sadly, half fondly, "as I study them—the poets you bade me read because you love them so—I realize that they are greater than the greatest poets of my race—the master Chinese poets. O, my Jasmine, these are dark and bitter days; but my

soul tells me that the dawn is coming, the dawn of the redemption of the East, coming as it will come—by the perfect union, the crowned and sceptered oneness of Japan and China. What evil thing has so divided them I cannot fathom. It has been the disease and the catastrophe of all Asia's history. But it is passing, Peerless: the marriage of China and Japan is coming—I can hear the bridal drums faintly in the distance. It is coming. May we live to see it—thou and I, sweet soul of my soul; for it will bring the world's lasting millennium. Asia will be drenched—as my heart is—in the perfume of Jasmine flowers. And Japan and China—one flesh, one mind, one country—will rule the world!"

And the girl "throned" on his lap, in his arms, believed him—and loved him for the splendor of his dream.

"That anything can sweeten the sweetness of our love seems to me a miracle passing all the gods ever granted; but to me the thought of our two beloved countries wedded—for ever one—does bestow an added sweetness to our love—yours and mine—my queen, Peerless, Jasmine. And for Japan and China there shall be no divorce ever, and the West shall be her vassal."

That *was* a splendid dream. And Toru Osuro meant it, believed it. It is as splendid a dream as ever the mind of man wrought yet, and thousands of men believe it, live for it, wait for it, slave for it—in Japan. Toru Osuro was not eccentric, not an exceptional visionary. He was one of many. Their number is growing. No earthquake of earth or of Wars' seeming deciding can uproot or kill that belief while the Japanese are Japanese. But whether Japan or China should be the dominant unit of those two strengths merged, or just

how much equality they'd share, he did not state to the Chinese girl. He made love to her instead; perhaps it served his purpose as well.

As he nursed and caressed the girl who was risking more than she knew—but Osuro knew—his hand fondling about her jacket felt under its silky crêpe a folded paper; his quick ears caught its faint crackle. His face sharpened hungrily; but he hid his face against her hair and did not speak of what he knew she had under the pretty coat. He could wait. It was enough to know that she had obeyed him at last and that she had succeeded. He had known that she'd obey, sooner or later; but he had feared that she might not succeed. He would not ask for what she had brought; she should give it without his asking.

He was patient, or seemed so, and the girl in his arms was happy. No man had made love to her before. She had not known that life could be such ecstasy.

Osuro was very patient; he plyed his wooing and waited.

When he knew she must go he told her so with words that broke with his reluctance.

"It is not safe for you to stay longer now," he whispered.

"I know," she sighed, "but, oh, Toru—"

"Jasmine!" the man's voice told of torture as he released her. His eyes ravished her face. And when she drew the paper from its hiding and held it out, he took it carelessly, without a glance at it—put it down indifferently.

"Do you not want it after all?" she asked indignantly in her own tongue. "I have periled my new

freedom to get it and bring it to you. I ran a risk with every stroke of my brush, and I never dared copy more than one character at a time, I feared so that some one might come. And now, it is nothing to you. Why did you so beg me to get it for you?''

Osuro looked at her sorrowfully and answered her, as she had spoken, in Chinese—less fluent than hers. ''Even as I told you, I want it. But while you are here, it is nothing to me. There is nothing in all the world but you, when you are here. If all the treasures of our East were heaped about ne, I would not count them, not spare them a glance. You are my wealth, the pearl of my soul, jasmine-flower of my existence. When you have left me, I shall have time for it. You have done me a priceless service. May all the gods reward and joy you. But these last sacred moments—are ours. Ambition, even the welfare of the empires we work for, are but trash, dust on the roadway. There is nothing but love—our love. I will think of nothing else, speak of nothing else now. But when your absence poisons this room your presence perfumes now, then this lover will look at his rare flower's gift and value it—value it for what it will teach, value it ten thousand times more because the pearl of his soul granted his prayer and brought to him the thing he asked.''

''I will always do that, when possibility permits, my lord,'' she promised. ''But—oh—Toru, swear to me again that this that I do will never be used or twisted to their harm: to my august father's or any other's. Swear it to me again.''

''Can you think it? I harm those you love! Oh, you tear my heart from my breast and throw it into

the hungry hyena's den, to doubt me so. But—listen—again I swear, and may all the gods forsake me, may thy love leave me, if—"

"Forgive me, Toru. You gave me your sacred oath already. I will not ask it again. I will not have it again. I do not doubt you, Toru; you would not harm them, I know. For harm to them would give my heart to the starving snow-tiger."

"I would not harm a worm on the wayside your shoe had brushed." Toru Osuro's voice was an oath, and so were his eyes.

Standing there together in the fragrant daylight that rippled in through the carefully drawn rice blinds, the Japanese in his long gray robe, the Chinese girl in all the gay finery of her youth and caste, Osuro and "Jasmine" made a vivid picture of throbbing life and alien lovers. Alike in slimness and health, they were alike in little else: she typically Chinese, he as typically Japanese. No two race-types differ more unmistakably, more sharply. How Westerns ever can mistake a Japanese for a Chinese, a Chinese for a Japanese, is one of the insoluble riddles.

Usually she stole to her Japanese lover wearing English garments, for her being out alone and unattended was less conspicuous so. The New Woman of "Young China" is fearless on the Chinese streets now and walks them fearsomely clothed in what she believes to be European-like raiment. The Chinese woman who still stays in her courtyard, and finds it room and scope and world enough, still wears the exquisite garb of an older China's more exquisite day—that was as happy and possibly as significant and not less noble.

"Jasmine's" girlish vanity knew that her own dress

suited her own prettiness best, showed it loveliest. Toru must see her at her best sometimes. She had risked it to-day.

Jasmine's face was smothered on her lover's breast. Her stick-pins peeped and dangled between the hands that pressed her perfumed hair. She looked a brocaded, jeweled rainbow against the gray cloud of his meek robe. Her tiny yellow hands, emerald, pearl and ruby-ringed, looked like little lemon butterflies as she pressed them on his somber sleeves.

Osuro held her very close.

But presently he reluctantly folded her cloak about her, and summoned Gomutzu to attend her to the outer door. Was all safe to the gate and beyond? He bent reverently at her going, bent scrupulously so until the sound of their going had died beyond the outer door.

Then Osuro smiled, went back to his seat at the table, took up the paper Jasmine had left, unfolded it, bent over it intently.

Once or twice his lips curved in pleased surprise; twice his eyes clouded in anger or dismay; several times he nodded. Most of it was what he'd suspected.

Osuro's Japanese face was not beautiful as he read and studied, but it was knife-sharp. The verse-book of Wang Seng-Ju caught in his sleeve and fell to the floor; Osuro thrust it away with his toe contemptuously.

CHAPTER XIII

THE Yos were "at home." Lady Rutherford-Carmichael called it a garden party; Pilkington called it a circus. Whichever it was, it was exceedingly

well done. And whatever he called it, George Pilkington had enough intelligence, and had lived long enough in China, to know that this function was fine in more senses than one; and Pilkington was very glad that Drew had secured him a card of invitation. In fact, Tom had secured him two; every one who had received one had received two; one, a banner-shaped, crimson, very thin, silky paper that stated, in black Chinese characters, beautifully painted, that your degraded worm Yo Wing So craved the undeserved honor and condescension of your distinguished and rose-blossom presence in the low mud-puddle and tumble-down shanty which the presumptuous Yo Wing So called his house and garden, from the Hour of the Monkey to the Hour of the Dog, on the Fourth Day of the Sixth Moon: the other an impeccably Western square of cardboard with the engraved statement, "Mrs. Yo, At Home. Thursday, June the thirtieth, three to eleven. R. S. V. P."

If the East and the West never drank out of one loving cup before or since, they did that Thursday. What the Easterns felt or thought, only they knew; and none of them showed. But every Western there enjoyed it exceedingly. They'd have been exceedingly ungrateful if they had not, for Yo did them extremely well.

There was delight for every taste that was not cheap or vulgar—Chinese and European details skilfully blended—or, rather, dovetailed—and all utterly unlike what Yo's Western guests had expected.

Every race represented in Shantung to-day was represented in the gala-decked garden—every race but two; neither a German nor a Japanese was there. A Russian archduchess! (governess now to Mang the banker's daughters) coquetted impartially with Manchus, Chinese,

Hindoos, a Spaniard, several Frenchmen, a missionary from Pennsylvania, two Portuguese and Lord Rutherford-Carmichael, confiding to each that all the others were "darlings."

But neither the guest-rooms of the old house nor the great winding garden nor the many courtyards were crowded. Perhaps that was almost the best of it! It was not all the Europeans resident in Shantung, or globe-trotting through, that Yo had cared to admit to this home. He had had the invitations (the white "At Home" ones) carefully and competently censored. All the Chinese there were sash-wearers, of course; or their fathers had been until Chinese folly had taken to check-trousers and "stove-pipe" hats for the men; and for Chinese ladies to corsets and skirts more or less like what are worn in Boston and Liverpool.

All the house was open (all but the women's sleeping apartments, the *Fo Lou* where the gods were, the *Shu Chai* in which books are reverenced—Yo could not risk his best books—and an upper room of Yo's rarely unlocked but by his own hand) and every guest was free to roam and look at will. Algy Brown spent a frolicsome hour with the dogs in their own courtyard and pavilion; Burton made for the stables.

Aline had hinted to Yo Wing So that nothing else would so interest his foreign guests as to be allowed to see "every bit of a really-truly Chinese house," and Yo had laughed and bowed and given the order as soon as his mother had consented. She had scowled at the suggestion at first. But Drew had backed Aline's request up with his, and Yo Z'in Tö had laughed and cackled out herself the unheard of order that for that day the "flowery" itself should be opened and unforbidden—

even the sacred garden beyond it which until then no living man but Yo and Tom Drew ever had seen, the *Hou T'ing* shut apart by the trellis-work of red-glazed bricks which was called the "flower-wall" because vines of bloom and fruit twined in and out it. Sometimes they called it the "singing-wall," because wind-harps and little bronze and silver bells hung above it and made a tinkle of elfin music when the faintest breeze stirred.

There were great silk tents of such "refreshments" as only the kitchens of such Chinese affluence and taste can achieve: snails roasted with aubergines, frogs in mango jelly, frappé melons served with sizzling nut-stuffed quail. Much else. The gold-foiled "bubbly" was the least of the wines.

There were jugglers and necromancers, beautiful and wonderful Punch and Judy shows, actors in a classic play, Chinese music, birds singing on the trees, free and caged, a *diva* from Italy, rope-walkers, snake-charmers, jeweled chessmen on inlaid lacquered boards. There was everything that the Yos had been able to think of, and everything that extortionate Mrs. Giggles had been able to suggest, to pleasure the guests whom Yo had invited to have the honor of meeting Mr. Drew of New York.

Much was weird, much was wonderful, but nothing else half so beautiful—not even the gardens, Tom told Ya-ling as they watched it—as the lantern dance when the sudden dusk fell: ten score children—mere babies many of them—dancing on stilts, swinging lovely lanterns as they danced the dance that not even the Chinese there ever before had seen except at a Feast of Lanterns. They were incredibly skilful, those Chinese child-dancers. In and out they wove in perfect time and rhythm to the

music—now slow, now fast—of flutes and cymbals: children dressed in splendid masquerade, masked in god-masks, wearing tiger heads, dragon heads, heads of hawks and elephants; each robed in the long gowns of China's earlier centuries. Each swung a lighted lantern. No one made one misstep. They bowed nearly to the ground, rose again and danced on—all on their tall red and gilded stilts. The great night-lantern came out in the sky above them and shot them with long javelins of gold and silver. Nightingales gathered and sang to them from the ash-trees. On and on the Chinese children danced on their tall stilts, swinging their painted lanterns as they danced. When at last they paused, slid down and knelt a moment on the ground, Aline Rutherford-Carmichael was crying softly.

But the long, leisurely function ended at last. Guest-tea, boiling thimblefuls in tiny priceless bowls, was handed obsequiously, and each parting guest was speeded away with a "good-by" gift,—silver the poorest, ivory and even jade the costliest, mementoes to keep, mementoes of how worth-while a thing it was to gain Yo hospitality. And when Yo himself gave Walter Swift a fan—perhaps the one Swift most had coveted—the suave American could only stammer his thanks, so overcome was he with schoolboy-like delight.

Swift had not seen much of all the long day's displays. He had glued himself in Yo's sanctum where the chief treasures of generations of earnest collecting were stored in cabinets and chests, and he had been free of them all—free to open and handle and gloat. For was he not a friend of Yo Ki's friend Mr. Drew? Yo Wing So would have lingered there in the "Reverence Books" room with him gladly. He loved this man for his love

of fans and great masters' silks, of porcelains and ivories and jades. But Chinese hospitality must show no favoritism; Yo had not stayed, but had moved among his polyglot guests almost impartially; not knowing half the Westerns by name, able to say very little to those who spoke only French, able to say nothing at all they could understand to those who spoke neither one of his own tongues nor English nor French, but greeting them all, showing his gratitude at the kindness they did him in being here, telling his welcome with hands and face and bending gestures that needed no words, dressed—as a Chinese always should be—in the robes of his race, wearing the perfumed chain of a once-regal office, the three-eyed peacock feather sticking out straight and horizontal from his coral-button cap, a tiny fan—not one he'd painted—never still in his hand. But he kept slipping back to the sanctum to point out a gem he feared the other might overlook, to tell a jade's history, explain a green-bronze's meaning, to explain—while he caressed it—why a lacquer was passing excellent, a Satsuma flawless, unmatched in China, once to bring Swift food and urge him to eat, twice with his own hands to bring him drink, the bright yellow wine of Shantung. Perhaps this was the happiest day of Walter Swift's life; certainly it was the most envious.

It was not the American connoisseur's first day with the treasures of Yo Wing So. Drew had been as good as his word and his hope; and he had not boasted vainly. His wish had flung Yo's gates and panels wide to Swift and to the Rutherford-Carmichaels. Walter had been here often before, and Yo had recognized him as one of his own, when the cosmopolitan had first taken a cup of rose jade in his hand, and not only had called it what it

was but had known its quality and its age and had surmised the master jade-worker who had carved it. Because Tom Drew had seemed to wish it—it had needed but one word of hint—Yo had made the Rutherfords as cordially and sincerely welcome as he had Walter Swift and had commanded his women to welcome and pleasure the lady and had seen that they did; but it was Walter Swift that Yo Wing So loved—they were heart-brothers because they both loved the same exquisite things and *knew* them. One whole day they had spent here together a week ago—taking together Art's splendid communion—a sacrament of deep and sincere appreciation; Swift in his well-cut gray-tussore suit and apple-green cummerbund, Yo in a crane-embroidered purple silk petticoat and a rainbow jacket that smelt of attar of roses and triple verbena; devout and unaffected in their self-same love of the inestimable—beauty and art more vital than human life.

To-day Swift for the most part was alone, his cameo face bent and aglow over the treasures he almost hesitated to touch and touched so reverently. Yo Wing So came and went—went when he must, came when he could—and each time he came a fine Chinese face kindled anew at the kindling the host saw and understood on the fine face of the American guest.

Pilkington gulped down his scalding guest-tea hastily—thankful that there was so little of it—and went at once; he knew his China well enough to do that. But Drew and the Rutherfords and Walter, who had rejoined them at last, sipped theirs contentedly, when it had cooled a little, and made no move to go. They were privileged to stay—till sunrise, or longer, if they would.

And six or seven Chinese men, having taken their leave with all ceremony, slipped back one by one through the inconspicuous, half-hidden North gate, and went quietly into the house, and gathered unobtrusively in an upper close-shuttered chamber—and waited there without a word until Yo Wing So joined them.

Yo Wing So secured the panel. The men he'd left on guard outside it were armed. They were trusty, and in their master's service they'd know no scruple.

Neither Tom Drew nor Yo's trusted elder daughter herself could have passed into that shuttered room or come ear-close to its closed panel.

It was a bare room, almost naked of furniture—quite naked of ornament. But it felt to hold a great "presence"; perhaps it *did*—the Presence of China.

Eight Chinese were taking a sacrament there—a grittier, bitterer sacrament than that Swift and Yo had shared down in the *Shu Chai*—breaking the bread of deathless, determined patriotism, pledging their souls and their lives, swearing a day of reckoning, final and absolute reckoning, to all who violated the sacred soil of Shantung: a solemn Chinese sacrament that no alien might share, nor any woman.

A slip of a Chinese girl had watched them, counted them one by one, as they went to their quiet tryst—and then had gone back to the garden and to the Western guests her father had charged her to pleasure and tend. Madame Yo, very gracious but growing sleepy, Mrs. Yo and her other daughter already were there with Lady Rutherford-Carmichael, doing their Chinese best to amuse her—a needless effort of hospitality, for Aline Rutherford-Carmichael was amusing herself to the full of her bent and had been all day long. She usually did.

Both the Misses Yo wore their own beautiful Chinese dress to-day. Madame Yo did, of course; garments less lovely, but far more splendid and jeweled than her granddaughters'; but Mrs. Yo, in compliment to Lady Rutherford, was a painful picture in ill-adjusted stays and a frock of purple satin that looked as if it had been made in Berlin, but which had been made by an English modiste in Shanghai. It was protuberant with gold roses, tufted with ostrich feathers, heavy with ermine; a wonderful gown, wonderfully and proudly worn. Mrs. Yo was brilliantly painted—face, mouth and eyebrows—and she had not brought herself to eschew a Chinese coiffure of extreme and bauble-hung elaboration. The elder girl's face was scarcely powdered, scarcely touched with rouge; the younger sister's a little more. Madame Yo wore her time-beaten parchment wrinkles—as a widow must—clean and undisguised. But Aline tried in vain to count her diamonds and wasn't foolish enough to attempt to count or to guess her pearls—each pearl as sheened and rose-or-green flecked as a young pigeon's neck.

"It has been a lovely party," Aline Rutherford told Mrs. Yo. Mrs. Yo giggled and patted Lady Rutherford-Carmichael's hand. And at something she exclaimed Yo Su giggled too.

"Tell me!" Aline demanded.

"What Mother said?" Miss Yo translated. "Our mother said that your hand was as soft as hers and as warm, in spite of its hard dead color."

"Well," Lady Rutherford-Carmichael answered back, "I bet mine's done the more work."

"Yes," Ya-ling agreed. "I 'bet' it has. Our mother has never played tennis, or ridden a hard-mouthed horse,

or cut meat with a knife, or spanked her own babies—as you told me you'd done the other day when I heard one of them crying."

"Good gracious! You poor things! Are you never spanked when you are children? It's wicked and neglectful not to spank them when they need it. And you ought always to do it yourself. I never let a nurse do it. Didn't your mother ever?"

"Never," Yo Ya-ling assured her. "She would not dare. Our venerable grandmother always did it. It is her right. With us no mother may when there is a grandmother. She does it still sometimes—our distinguished one."

"But she isn't big enough!"

"She manages. We have to make it convenient for her," Ya-ling said simply. "But about the babies, I joked, Lady Rutherford-Carmichael. They are not spanked at all. A Chinese child is not struck. We have an adage, 'From the end of the well-used spanking-rod a filial son peeps out'; but the spanking-rod is not often used. It hangs dust-covered in most of our peasants' huts; I never have seen one in a sash-wearer's house. But a Chinese son is filial almost always. Perhaps children are spoiled here, rather. It seemed to me in England, that ours—here at home—was the better way, though. I thought that English children obeyed less and loved less than ours do. We are taught that it never is right to hurt a little child. After we are older we are whipped of course, whenever we ought to be; but we have no punishments to remember of our childhood, and I think it keeps our memories sweeter and our courage sounder."

"It wouldn't work in the U. S. A.," Tom Drew asserted.

"Good gracious, no!" his countrywoman agreed. "Our children are quite out-of-hand enough as it is. What they'd be if no one ever brought them up with a good sharp round turn, isn't to be thought of."

"How can a round turn be a sharp turn?" Giggles asked lazily.

Aline ignored him.

"But perhaps your little ones never would be naughty, if they never were punished, and never went in dread of it," Ya-ling suggested.

"Don't you believe it!" Lady Rutherford retorted.

Swift, like many middle-aged bachelors, was not deeply interested in child-lore. He thought such talk was wasted time and got nowhere. He changed the subject.

"I tried to catch up with you yesterday afternoon, Miss Yo," he said to Ya-ling, "when you were hurrying home. But you were too far ahead of me, and you went too fast."

"Yesterday afternoon, Mr. Swift! But you are mistaken; I was here in the garden all day yesterday, when I was not at rice, in the house."

"Oh," Swift said carelessly, "then I was mistaken. Glad I didn't catch up with the other lady. She might have resented my hurrying after her."

"Why did you think it was I? But we all look alike to you, we Chinese, don't we? All English people did to me when I first went to school."

"By no means," Walter insisted, "not to me. I have seen more Chinese faces than any others during nearly as long as you have lived, Miss Yo. Two Chinese faces

rarely look alike to me. It was not the other Chinese lady's face, for I did not see it; it was her height and her walk and her dress, a green and gray tweed skirt, that was very like one I've seen you wear. I noticed it particularly each time I've seen it, for I like the stuff uncommonly."

"So, my old tweed has a double, not I! I'm sorry—I like that stuff too, and one doesn't care to be dressed in the duplicate; at least I do not."

Lady Rutherford rose. "We must go now. And see, Madame Yo is fast asleep. We have stayed disgracefully late."

"But the grandmother sleeps so often," Su urged them. "She'll wake presently and be as wide awake and merry as a red grasshopper." And Yo Ya-ling protested that they must not go until the moon was at its full zenith, to make their home-going the brighter.

But Aline would not wait for that. Drew was staying all night at the Yos'; he had done so twice before. But the other three went then, and as speedily as the ceremonial grief of the Yos would let them—went attended to the outer gate by Yo himself and half his retainers. Tom went to the gate, too, and Mrs. Yo and Yo Su also; while Yo Ya-ling sat mouse-quiet at the grandmother's feet. Yo Z'in Tö was not mouse-quiet. Her profound slumber was delicately audible, and her old jeweled head nodded on her neck like a withered pippin on its over-burdened stem. Yo Z'in Tö might wake in a moment, or she might sleep on so until the sun was high. No one would venture to wake her, nor would Yo Ya-ling leave her. But she—the girl—must not sleep while her grandmother did, until others came

to wait beside her. Always some one—usually several —waited wide-eyed while Madame Yo slept, that they might be briskly ready to do her first bidding when she stirred. And it did not often happen that Yo Z'in Tö stirred from sleep without instantly commanding something. And it was nearly thirty years since Yo Z'in Tö had been kept waiting when she ordered—not once since her husband's mother had died and, dying, had left Yo Z'in Tö supreme and unquestioned mistress of all the Yos: their very fate, as hundreds of just such little old Chinese women are the fate of just such great Chinese families—old, tottery, toothless, narrow, incredibly puissant. It is not too hard to understand how placidly Chinese men face death and accept it; but it is impossible for the mind of Western women to understand how old Chinese women ever consent to die at all, so pampered, tended and paramount do their children and their children's children make life for them. There is nothing else in human existence so splendid as to be an old Chinese woman surrounded by her young. Every faculty of hers that fades they replace to her an hundredfold; they keep her age younger than youth, stronger than manhood at the prime: a great imperial people that worships its ancestry and makes the decay and passing of old age a jeweled, loved sacrament. Old breasts sagged and milkless, old hands fleshless and palsied, old heart beating slower, slower, old feet feebling—service given long ago rewarded, blessed with bubbling love, childbirth paid, old tendance tended—old age crowned!

While Yo Z'in Tö slept Yo Ya-ling would watch, wait patiently, caring nothing for the music in the distance, nothing for younger hands, thoughts, instincts that whispered and beckoned.

CHAPTER XIV

"THAT younger girl of Yo's," Giggles stated to his wife and Swift as they lingered over lunch-dessert on the table, the table-servants gone—"is uncommonly pretty."

"Devilish pretty," Walter said grudgingly.

"Well," Lady Rutherford caught him up sharply, "why shouldn't she be? Why should you object?"

"*Dangerously* pretty," Swift added significantly.

"Precisely!" Rutherford agreed.

"I see trouble ahead," Walter Swift said gloomily. "Drew can't keep his eyes off her."

"Why should he?" Aline demanded. "Can you? I can't."

"I'm safe to look *and* to look away again: warranted," Swift asserted. "And I suspect Rutherford is, too."

"Giggles! Giggles doesn't know a pretty woman when he sees one."

"Don't I!" her husband exclaimed indignantly. "You don't flatter yourself that I selected my wife for any inner virtues, do you? I am noted for my imagination, I grant you, but I never had all the imagination that would have called for."

"You! You selected? You didn't. I did the selecting."

"So you did, now you come to speak of it. But I consented—in the end—but it wasn't for your good homespun qualities, my dear. It was ornament that won me. Now, let us be serious. *You* took Tom on and made us follow suit. It's up to us to—to look after him."

"Mean 'rescue' him, don't you?"

"Yes," her husband nodded grimly.

"Rescue him from what? From looking at Yo Su when he can't help seeing her?"

"You know what I mean, as well as I do. Walter and I are barking up the same tree, and we are not barking up the wrong one. I've not said a word to Swift; Swift has not said a word to me. I had no idea he knew, and I don't suppose he thought I did. But you see we both have seen it. I'm not given to hallucinations, and neither is Walter. What we both are sure of must be there."

"Giggles," his wife wailed, "you are wasted in Shantung. You belong in the British Cabinet—at the head of it."

"Give me time, dear."

"Rutherford is right," Swift told his hostess earnestly. "I had an inkling of it the first time I saw them together, and yesterday I was sure."

"You don't expect me to believe that you had eyes yesterday for anything but Yo's fans and pictures, do you, Walter?"

"For very much more," Swift assured her. "Eyes that care for beauty as mine do are eager for beauty in all its forms. Yo Su is even lovelier than her father's fans: as lovely, in another way, as his 'Soldiers Waiting' of Ma Yuan's. And you yourself have just said that I couldn't tear my eyes off her peach-flower face. I am fifty-six, Tom is not thirty. He is in a nasty bog, Lady Aline, or I'm some Dutchman. We must pull him out of it if we can. If we don't there'll be worse than bloodshed in the Drew family."

"Parents wouldn't like it, I suppose," Rutherford remarked.

"Wouldn't stand for it at any price. Certainly Powers Drew wouldn't. I don't know Mrs. Drew. But I know a good deal about Powers Drew, and I know his breed and his standards. If your wife will permit me to state an unassailable fact plainly and simply, Powers Drew would raise particular hell, and keep it raised, if anything of that sort happened. It would end Tom with his father, and end him in America for that matter, too."

"The girl's a lady," Rutherford urged.

"A very great lady and the loveliest one I have ever seen and I have no doubt sweet and good and accomplished. The Yo women are all that, as most of the women among the sash-wearers are. But that wouldn't count with Powers Drew in the circumstances. She is Chinese; that settles it once for all."

"It strikes me," Rutherford told the other quietly, "and not for the first time, that you Americans are not always quite consistent. You preach—pardon the word—equality, 'born free and equal,' you remember; but I cannot see that you always practise it. You fought a hideous war to free the slaves"—Swift smiled under his soft gray mustache, but let the historical inaccuracy pass, and Aline Rutherford knew too little of her own land's true history to detect it—; "you butted in—I again apologize for a word—at Versailles to secure the best seats in the sun for all the small whippersnapper peoples; you have made yourselves the champion of China—and pretty nearly ousted us—England—from China in doing it, and yet when it comes to downright, unfair race-prejudice you are worst of us all. You are driving us from our old Chinese holdings and influence; you are holding even Japan at bay (and I suppose kid-

ding yourselves that you are going to be able to do it permanently). You are standing over China, a benevolent watch-dog and an indulgent nurse, pouring your millions in, hard-won millions from Wall Street, Chicago stockyards, Western mines; you defy the rest of the world to harm but a hair of John Chinaman's head; you are lending China your constitution, (and in my poor opinion a pretty sort of infernal-machine it is going to prove in China's handling), and your forms and methods of government, showing her how to make cocktails, clam-chowder and molasses candy, innoculating her with your industries, skilled and unskilled, giving her Mason Hamlin organs and McCormick reapers, taking her boys to your bosom at Yale and Princeton, sending them back to her full-fledged republicans or democrats skilled in the caucus and ward politics; you are turning old China into a newer, more strident United States as far and as fast as you can; *but* you are refusing the Chinese the social parity and fair play we give them in England. You'll coach and pamper them; but you will not give them any sincere spiritual welcome—that's about what you'll call it. I, a plain Englishman, call it decent fair-play. You pat them on the back, show your teeth if any of us wants a bit of a look in; but you won't *mix*. You do *not* regard the Chinese as your equals (or any other race, I dare say) and you—you yourself, who live in China because you like to, better than anywhere else, and seem to understand and admire the Chinese both more deeply and more sincerely than any other white man I've ever met—are rabidly indignant at the merest hint of marriage between one of them and one of you."

"Agreed, Rutherford. Much of what you say is fairly true. We do not mix—not nearly as much as you do.

And *we* are right. We are white, you know, and they are yellow."

"And what of it! It won't do, Walter: you may be the finest people invented yet; but you are the most inconsistent and the most prejudiced. It's all—this part of it—your long-standing black-and-white broil. It has narrowed you—all of you, and I never yet have met an American that realized that the difference between Asia and Africa—negroid Africa—is many times greater and more *essential,* basic, real, than the difference between Asia and what for brevity may be called Christendom."

"Perhaps. Perhaps not. I deny it. But let us get down to business—nearer the case in hand. Would you like to see a friend of yours—an Englishman—married to Yo Su?"

"Why not? If they liked it, I shouldn't mind."

"Giggles!"

"We have had several such marriages in London—people in society—and they seem to work all right."

"We have had a great many more that have worked abominably," his wife retorted hotly. "And what do two or three such marriages, that contrive to jog on somehow, prove? And what does 'seem to' amount to? Nothing! Really, Giggles you are impossible!"

"And you," he said gently, "are an American."

"Well," Swift re-asserted, "however it may work in London, it would work murder or worse in the Drew family."

"But," Rutherford asked, "need we really worry, after all; for would not Yo most certainly prevent it?"

"Not he," Walter Swift answered decidedly. "Yo Wing So would deny Tom Drew nothing. Nor would the old dowager. *Nothing.*"

Aline Rutherford pushed her fruit plate away and rose impatiently.

"You are a pair of sillies," she told the two men tartly. "Tom is no more in love with Mr. Yo's beauty daughter than I am. And he never will be. He looks at her—he isn't a blind man. But that is all he wants of her."

"I think you are mistaken, dear," her husband ventured.

And Swift said stoutly, "I am sure you are."

"Noodles—both of you!" Aline flung at them, as she went to the wide open garden-site window. "You *are* barking up the wrong tree, as you so elegantly put it. It is the other girl!"

"What!" the men said together, one aghast and both incredulous.

But they were alone in the dining-room. The peeress had flung through the window, across the verandah, and down into the shaded garden, with a gait that in a woman of social position less secure might have been called flaunting—almost rude.

Swift and Rutherford stared at each other in surprise and silence.

"Impossible!" Walter Swift said presently.

"The plain one! It doesn't seem possible. But Aline is usually right."

"She isn't right this time," Swift insisted. "I don't call Miss Yo plain, though, not by a long shot. But pray heaven it isn't she. That would be worse—damnably worse."

"Why? She has lived in England—is half westernized already."

"Is she? A Chinese never is westernized. They

learn our ropes, I grant you; but they never change their instincts or natures, any more than they can change their skins. Yo Ya-ling—my God, I hope not!"

"Why?"

But Swift would say no more. And Rutherford saw that the other was seriously troubled.

CHAPTER XV

LADY RUTHERFORD was wrong. Tom Drew was not in love with Yo Ya-ling. Such an idea had not even remotely entered his head. And he always had suspected it when he had been in the slightest danger of falling in love even slightly.

But Aline was right as well as wrong. Drew was not attracted to Yo Su, except that watching her extreme prettiness attracted him inevitably, as it did every one who saw her, and had done for years. But the girl's attraction for Drew was of the surface only. And she disliked him. There would be no love affair between Yo Su and Tom Drew—unless initial antipathy swung, as it does sometimes, into the opposite feeling.

Possibly an edge of Elijah's psychic mantle had touched Lady Rutherford-Carmichael.

A peculiar comradeship, an almost sexless freemasonry, had grown between Drew and Miss Yo.

Yo, the father, left them to it; chiefly because Drew's will was sacrosanct to Yo Ki's father and partly because, having decided to let young China show what it could accomplish, Yo Wing So was determined to give it a perfectly fair field, even favor. He neither approved nor disapproved. If the new, untried dispensation could

better China, all the gods speed it; if it failed to, young China must give over and old ways come back. In the meantime Yo held a watching brief and neglected it, thought almost as little about it as old Madame Yo did, who neither had heard of it nor suspected it. Yo was immersed in his ivories and lacquers, in the pictures he owned and the pictures and fans he painted. The absorption in his art of the Chinese artist is "perfect and entire, wanting nothing," passing that of all other artsmen. The merest Chinese craftsman is immersed in what he makes while he is making it. The Chinese artist lives in his work. All the coarser things of being are to him not much more than a dream and a haze. Even paternity—the most unselfish and devoted of all paternities—is not so much a soul-thing with him as the art that is he, the pulse of his being, the rock on which he lives secure and indifferent to outer fortunes, buffets and rewards. Probably, the wide world over even, blood ties grip the artist less than they do all others. Ki's death had ripped Yo Wing So to the core; but even at first it had not maddened or palsied him as it had Yo Z'in Tö. It had not beaten him as it had Ki's mother, and the passing days healed the father's hurt. His hand had not lost its cunning; paint was still paint, his brush his dearest, nearest companion, the work he wrought the heir of his soul, first-born of his being. He kept his love of his son; his memories of Ki kept their tenderness and their pride. His loyalty towards the man he held Ki's friend was entire and burning—a loyalty that would waver at nothing, a gratitude without measure or end; but beauty and art were Yo Wing So's All. Would heaven have given him "such another world of one entire and perfect chrysolite," Yo Wing So would not

have sold his slightest silk that Ma Yuan had painted for it.

Yo held in his keeping the archives of the secret band to which he belonged, held all the more safely perhaps because he never brooded over them, forgot them more often than remembered, and often was off and apart in a world of his own while the others discussed and planned. His was a world in which there existed neither emperor nor president, German pirates nor Japanese snakes, neither alien consortiums nor Presbyterian missionaries, neither White Peril nor Chinese miscarriage and blunder: a world in which there were only music and color and line, the beat of the rain on the wistaria, the smell of the lilies at sunrise, the jeweled panoply of the sky, the verse of Li Po, the edicts of him who slept at K'üfu, the sweeter, less salient teaching of Lao Tsu, the rush of the silver river, the storm's oratorio, the flush the sunset thrust across the dragon's scales, the tapestry flowers made of earth—his World. It made him lax at conspiracy now and then; but the others (Fêng Ah, Li Pi-Chu and the rest) thought his custody of their secret archives all the safer for his detachment, which even a mole must have seen. And Li and Fêng and K'ung Kuo-fan were not mole-eyed. Few Chinese are. And certainly this detachment of Yo's held suspicion from him—made his house the safest possible trysting place in Shantung.

Yo had little idea how much Yo Ya-ling and Drew were together, or how far they wandered together and alone; but had he realized, Yo would not have objected. His girl knew English ways; she would not overstep or misuse them. And Yo was as willing that she should employ them when she chose, try them out, as he was

that China, the twentieth Century and the international world should "try out" young China—for what it might prove worth. It did not greatly interest him, this strange young China, and he knew that he did not understand it at all.

Ya-ling's mother knew better than Yo did how much of their days Ya-ling and the American spent together. But who was she, the wife and mother, to question what Yo and her mother-in-law did not question? Her grief for her boy still gnawed and was fresh. She drugged it with too much food and stubborn idleness. And what was it where a girl went and dawdled to a mother who had lost her only son? Little. Above all, Yo and Yo's mother ruled and guarded here. And the house gods were well paid and sumptuously kept. Mrs. Yo was puzzled a little sometimes; but she felt no fear.

And the old, old grandmother whose heart had worn itself out at the telescope up there on the wall, watching the distance through which Ki would come home to her, watching until she saw him coming in his coffin? She took little heed. Such as she lived, she lived in the past and in the hereafter: the past in which she had cradled Yo Ki in her arms, the hereafter in which they would cradle him once more and forever. The grandmother took little heed, nor would have cared.

There was nothing Yo Wing So would have denied Drew or have grudged him—unless, perhaps, the ivory and crystal table-lute that Li Po and Ming Huang had fingered to song, or one of the silks that Ma Yuan had painted. And Yo Wing So's mother would have denied Tom Drew nothing—not all the daughters of her house for his handmaidens—she herself thrown in, if he'd wished.

The friendship between the American man and the Chinese girl was untrammeled.

It grew and waxed sturdy as the wistaria and bamboos do in the Shantung sunshine. The days wove it tense and strong as the silk of the Sacred Province—and almost as without sentiment. Untrammeled, unwatched, uncriticized, it was far more a manly chumship than a dalliance of man and maid.

Yo Ya-ling knew and understood that Yo Wing So and Yo Z'in Tö would deny Tom Drew nothing. Drew never gave it a thought.

To them both—the man who was New York born and bred, and the girl who had lived exiled in England and come back home to China—race stood between them an insurpassable barrier which made something of their friendship's sweetness, much of its allurement and tang, much of its wholesomeness, and all of its safety.

They realized the safety and did not realize that in safety itself lurks a special danger—even as the flaw that makes its beauty lurks in the opal.

They went where they would, when they would, did what they would. Ya-ling was perfectly safe with no attendance but Drew's; Yo Wing So was almost a god in all that part of Shantung. He had fed the "babies" in famine time, replanted their fields the locusts had eaten, replaced their flocks the mountain wolves had ravished. There was not a bandit in all the province who would have harmed the hem of Yo Ya-ling's garment.

Her English school-years had made the Chinese girl fond of long country walks. Tom had been born with tireless legs which neither Cambridge nor Wall Street had softened.

Miss Yo took him far afield often, because she saw that he enjoyed it. He went with her readily, because he did enjoy it and because of the opportunities it gave him to speak and hear Chinese. And little by little, as they sauntered, China got bits of her message through to him —lifted her veil and showed him her face, with its dimpled hills, its flush of flowers, its tiny homes and unmarked paths. These were not the neutral things here that they can be in grayer places—China pulsing about them, quick in the girl's veins always, tingling in the man's more and more often. He "stayed" American as he always would, always must; but sometimes the lure of China reached him. But most of their hours together they spent in the old Shantung garden. And always they talked of China. There were few silent patches in their comradeship. Always they spoke of China. Yo Ya-ling taught; Tom Drew learned.

Powers Drew had enjoined, "*Learn* China and the Chinese. That is the *one* essential of what I want you to accomplish presently. Take your time about it. Do it thoroughly. Take all the time you want."

Powers Drew, half the world's circumference away in Wall Street, was well obeyed in the old Shantung garden.

CHAPTER XVI

DREW wondered where she was taking him, and why her face was so grave and exalted—a look on it he had not seen before. He had thought that he knew all her moods now. But he had several of Yo Ya-ling's moods yet to learn—and there were intrinsic moods of hers that were more than moods and even more her

country than she—moods of hers he never would see or suspect. She was of the East—her slight, thin usage of England no more than a gossamer scarf across her arm, and as easy and light to discard. He was a Western if ever there was one, never once to get into soul touch with the Orient, though he knew well enough that he was beginning to feel its charm; not adaptable and responsive to alien races and places as the Walter Swifts and Bayard Taylors are; a man of the world, and an uncommonly nice and straight one, but in no sense whatever a citizen of the world, and incapable and unwishful ever to become one: always Tom Drew of New York.

Ya-ling carried a basket on one arm—a large bag-shaped basket of white rice-straw beautifully braided. She would not let Drew carry it for her, and he noticed that she carried it with peculiar care, as if it and its contents were precious. Ya-ling wore Chinese dress to-day. When she did it always made Drew a little shy and strange with her. But he always saw that it suited her far better than the trim tailored shirtwaists and skirts she usually wore when they went tramping, and often in the house and garden. And to-day her face was painted, a little; he never had seen Ya-ling's face painted before, not even at the garden party. He wondered why she did it to-day: it gave a touch of ceremony, almost of ritual, to their jaunt, and so, too, did something in her carriage and the proud, sad, far-away look in her eyes. It was early morning when Ya-ling came to him in the garden and took him across it, out of the great dragon-scrolled and twisted gate. It was scarcely more than the hour of the Drake; the great day-lantern was flinging its floating scarfs of green and growing reds before it behind the hills; the flowers and

ferns still bent heavy with dew. Some of the birds up in the trees still kept sleepy heads under sheltering wings; a bat flew across their path; an owl on a sycamore tree was still wide awake. What would "Millionaires' Row" say to see him up and about at such an hour? Tom wondered—not going in, but going out! But Miss Yo had named the hour, and Drew had kept the appointment. Whatever his faults, Drew was no lie-abed; but this was not an hour at which it could have occurred to him to take a girl for a walk.

But the frugal Chinese waste no daylight. The tiny thatched stone homes they passed now and then were all up and doing. Women were spinning, men tending their patches of millet and their onion beds. Children were trudging back from the brook or nearest well with brimming water-buckets, almost as big as the mites that lugged, but lugged with great care lest one precious drop be spilt. Donkey-boys were urging their burdened beasts. Under an oak-tree a monk was telling his beads; under another two venerable gamblers were playing "fly-the-kite," too intent on their cards to look up even to see a Yo go by. The way they went skirted hills on which the remains of great *fêng tun* still showed clear-cut in the clear early light—*fêng tun* of stone on which signal fires had flamed "advance" and "take cover" in the wars of centuries ago. Out of a cave cut in a hill's rugged side a *hsien-jen* came and watched them as they passed. Ya-ling made him obeisance as she went.

"A mountain recluse," she explained. "The people believe him a wizard."

"He looks it," Drew admitted.

"In every great hill, so the peasants believe," Ya-

ling said gravely, "a venerable one lives who knows all secrets and will never die. Always his beard is white and very long. He knows the hearts of all men and of every race. For him the scroll of all time to come is unrolled."

Drew laughed. "And *you?*"

"I am a Chinese woman. I believe what my ancestors and our sages teach. They tell me nothing of witchcraft. But old beliefs and customs persist here that no longer do in any other province. We think it good that they do. We are proud that they do"—was all she replied.

Ya-ling was strangely silent; gracious but remote, and Tom had a feeling that her silence enjoined his. Their friendship had been almost continuously talkative until now; but to-day it seemed to Drew that they walked apart—he somewhat an alien in her silent processional. Their comradeship had been a quietly gay one; both were frankly amused at its incongruities—laughing at each other and laughed at with cordial good nature. He had made open fun of the absurd Chinese twists and turns she occasionally made with the English she spoke so readily; she had giggled her constant rebukes of the Chinese that he still stammered and mangled, helping it out and patching it with American idioms and phrases and eloquent college slang. But to-day Miss Yo did not giggle, scarcely once smiled, and Drew had no impulse to joke—and would not have dared. The virgin day, the place, their pace, her mien, had, he felt, a something devotional, something religious.

He had thought her jolly, astonishingly companionable, intelligent, splendidly sensible, at once restful and tonic, the most interesting girl he had ever met; not

nearly as lovely as Yo Su but far more worth looking at —every bit as good a pal as another man. To-day she seemed to him vestal, dedicated, not a little nun-like, engrossed in some convent service that he, heretic, ignorant, could watch but dimly from a distance, through a close-meshed grating. The nun worshiped, more spiritually shut from his presence than the grating shut him bodily from her; he watching her curiously, intently, she inaccessible to him, unconscious of him because of her absorption in another, dearer presence. A nun with a painted face—powdered, painted, jeweled, robed in rustling, flaunting splendor—but a nun! Her embroidered costly garments, her crimson satin trousers, her tinkling stick-pins, the heady perfume that her slightest motion shook from her garments as they went, the gems that buttoned diagonally her rakish pink and jade jacket, the very face-paint—all were but the vestments that she wore on a saint's day or at some high ceremonial of her faith.

An old woman looked up from the tray of rose-colored radishes she knelt by a brook to wash, and threw them a troubled smile. They passed a Franciscan who turned and watched them with grave sorrow on his selfless face.

Yo Ya-ling led the way through the cobbled street of a tiny village hidden among its trees, and she paused to lay a flower and a coin on the shrine of the *tu-ti*—the village god. A sea of sweetness drenched them as they passed a field of beans. The butterflies were awake; they were fluttering everywhere, making the scrub oaks look like shrubs in bloom—as thick in the bamboo grove as its delicate sword-shaped leaves.

They passed a Buddhist priest shorn and yellow-robed, carrying a new *mu yu*, the hollow wooden fish that lies

on every Buddhist altar in China and that the monks tap-tap as they repeat their sing-song prayers.

If China has no religion, it has much religiousness: many of religion's trappings and symbols. Drew counted half a dozen temples before the sun was fully up—Taoist, he supposed. One was perched high on a hill-side. Five hundred steps were cut up to it from the path. Yo Ya-ling prostrated herself on the lower step. But she stayed so only a moment and then went on steadily toward her goal.

More and more he wondered where she was taking him; why? And he was puzzled at the gala splendor she had chosen to wear for this rambling of theirs through the morning and the woodland and meadows, the virgin Chinese morning-dew still thick and cool in the tulip's chalice, on the quivering bamboos and the baby-budded wild white roses.

Then he saw—and understood.

Strange as it all had seemed to him, her deckings and her silence, he had sensed that this was no girl's freak, but some set and serious purpose of a Chinese woman. She as far from him as Ellis Island from the Jade Gate —farther, but alluring with a new allurement, pulling him oddly, strongly; out of his reach, shut and safe from his desire—but calling him, bewildering him, holding him. China would be a blurred dream to him, he suspected, when he was back in Earth's One Country; but Drew knew that always while he lived he would remember Yo Ya-ling as he saw her now—clearly. Nothing ever would blur that picture: a Chinese woman moving softly beside him across the silk-and-velvet mosses through the perfumed gold-and-gray dapple of the early sunshine and the bamboos and wild white roses that

nodded to it as they shaded the trackless path they clothed. But, quickened to her as he was, and half realized that he was, he had caught no hint of why they went, or where.

Well—he didn't care. It was pleasant going: the day was fresh and fair, the beauty of these woods was haunting, and the girl matched them—exceeded them.

They had come a long way—and they scarcely had spoken. But the man was as little tired as when they had left the garden. It was early September, the first of Shantung's three perfect months, and the air crisp from the hill tops was as refreshing as ice-cooled wine.

Each *li* of the way had put her from him—thrust him aside, as nothing had done before. She belonged here as truly as the little purple *ching tzu* growing wild in every tiniest patch of sand in Shantung; he was a native of another world, tolerated, welcomed here, but never to root or stay, a stranger, outbarred. Well—that was right enough; he liked his own country best.

At the lichen-crusted bole of an immense sycamore, all its tiny tips a-quiver with graceful seed-cases and rough-rinded, ball-shaped fruitage, their path of moss and ferns bent sharply to the east—and Drew saw and understood.

Yo Ya-ling had brought him to the grave of Yo Ki.

CHAPTER XVII

ALMOST surrounded by a close-packed sweep of dark cypress-trees, the tomb-graves of the Yos lay on tiers cut in the hill-side that *fêng-shui* had enjoined and clustered below it, each tomb-grave of stone or of

stone-hard plaster. One was of cornelian; for the number-one wife, whose ashes were powder beneath it and the centuries, had come from an imperial courtyard, to forget her own kindred and to romp with Yo babies in a Shantung courtyard, long before the Manchu had taken the Dragon throne, in the old celestial days when China's emperors were Chinese, slant-eyed and short-haired. One tomb of red-veined, green blood-stone marked the rest of a mighty warrior who had held all the coast-line against the war-junks of Nippon when Shantung soldiers were all "dwarf-catchers," and the forts on Shantung's coast were called "dwarf-catching stations." Japan *taught* China piracy!

The graveyard was very old. The newer graves, each with its great tree bending over it, were circular mounds with a simple white stone upright at the foot of each grave, the stones inscribed with names and dates and now and then with a virtue. Each grave of all the thousands had its own sacrificial altar. The older graves (built during the Ming and Yüan dynasties) were great "bee-hives," more than man-tall, elaborately carved—built impregnable against the wild, flesh-hungry wolf-hordes that attacked and devoured the living and the dead. Men outmatch wolves in the sacred province now, and "bee-hive" tombs no longer are erected. The other tombs and graves were white—snow-white, cream-colored by time, baked a deeper buff by the tingeing of ages.

Side by side the Yos lay in row after row, tier above tier—as ordered in death as their lives had been well ordered by tradition and sage precepts and the fine, slow chiseling of multiple centuries. Here they kept their state in the cypress-guarded pavilion of death, the cypress-edged garden of human decay—soldiers and

poets, mandarins, those who'd searched the stars, those who had served and increased the science of numbers and measurement, artists, great teachers, merchant-princes, men who had lived in thought, men who had wrought in strenuous action, men who had wrought in inspiration's long endless patience, one who had given China a new rose, one who had given Shantung a widened boundary: —each, Yo the son of Yo.

And their women lay among them—some close at the side of their lord, some meek at his feet, one who had been greatly loved in his very tomb and coffin, the body he'd fondled and cherished tenderly dust with his dust. Every wife lay at her lord's feet or his side, sharing his grave and named on his stone: every woman buried here the wife of a Yo; and all but three—poor, fruitless flowers, pitied, forgiven, spared the divorce their barrenness might have lawfully dealt them—the mothers of Yos; not one born a Yo or of the Sacred Province; each reborn a Yo by the second child-birth of marriage, made flesh of Yo flesh, chattel of a Yo mother-in-law. Not a Yo maiden among them of much more than half Yo Ya-ling's seventeen years; for never in the clan of Yo's long history, reaching back to the twilight time of antiquity's misty traditions, was there a Yo maid who had not been lifted into her bride-chair in her first marriageable moon and carried far to a bridegroom's province and kindred, to keep their ways and lie in their graves-place.

Not one here, man or woman, who had not served China and loved her, not one here who had done China an ill. And their little children slept with them here and there: little Chinese children who had wearied and fallen asleep in their young playtime. But most of the

babies lay in unmarked graves at a far side of the great burial place. The Chinese do not wear mourning for unmarried children unripe for nuptial, unfitted to perform the *sacra*. And no altars for sacrifice of wine and sweetmeats stood by the graves of the babies.

It was all exquisitely kept and tended: trim, dusted and garnished as a New England housewife's kept-for-company parlor, but with nothing of that old New England parlor's horse-hair stiffness about it; and if many of the offerings that lay on the horseshoe graves were beautiful and most of them costly, as many more were as fantastic and looked as useless—to Western eyes and intelligence—as the crowded ornaments on the Puritan parlor's what-not's black, angled shelves. There were flowers made of jade and corals, of gold-stone and tiniest shore-shells, ivory flowers dyed yellow by the years, soaked gray by storm, cooked brown and black by the sun, cups of gold and silver, dishes of bronze and lead, incense-holders of copper, tiny prayer-flags flying feebly, a Buddha of soapstone, a Kwan Yin-ko of blue marble as unstained by years' long grinding and weather's lashing perversity as the pure mother god-soul of Kwan Yin-ko herself, chop-sticks for the dead to eat with, tablet, inkcup and brush lest the poet-ashes, moved to paint a word-picture, should lack them, a flute for a Yo who had been the flute's slave and master, a doll for a girl-baby who had died three hundred years ago, a ball for a boy who had crawled to the river's edge and over nearly two hundred years earlier. There were tawdry emblems of superstition and mental chicanery, heathen trappings of heathen graves, toys of ignorance, curios for drawing-room cabinets in Christendom if Christian hands could filch them, rubbish and spiritually worse,

crass as the spiritualist's tambourine and independent writings, but woof and warp of China's veriest being and soul, perfume of China's heart, incense of her worship, lilt of her music, truth that she holds, bone and sinew of her character. They spoke of Chinese character and patient potency—meaningless to us, not for us to grasp, touch, or know, not (may Kwan Yin-ko grant) for the West to breathe on or tarnish; Chinese and indestructible, not to be shattered by a thousand world wars, not to be arbitrated or adjusted by a hecatomb of leagues of alien and patronizing nations, not to dwindle, sicken or pass while earth's yellow sun rides hot in earth's heaven, feeding earth's flowers, fattening earth's fruits, ripening earth's grains, sucking up to his hot effulgence the obedient, resistless tides of all earth's oceans.

It was a glad, cheerful place—all Shantung graveyards are—unfenced, for no Chinese will despoil a grave or steal or break a grave tree. The graveyards of Shantung, where so much of the province is sparsely timbered or treeless, are half its gardens and much of its beauty. Firs and oaks (the oaks of Northern China never are leafless) and many other trees grew between and about the graves, wild flowers laughed in the grass. A happy, united family—in their graves the Yos were not divided.

Not one grave here in the "graves-yard" of the Yos was neglected or untended. The breath of quick human love pulsed about them all. In all that coffined ancestry not one name was forgotten, not one spirit unworshiped. For each Yo moldered here was a direct ancestor—direct not collateral—of living Yos; each had born or begotten descendants to keep its grave decent forever and its spirit snug and happy On High, by the keeping and filial miracle of ceaseless human prayer. For (ex-

cept for the few laid apart long centuries ago) the youngest baby here rested in wedlock—married after death or at death's approach to some one or something —married to a vase or a tree or a rivulet, if no human eligible and suitable husband or wife had been available, and given descendants by adoption, so that the grave-side wailing, the worship of a son which alone can buy for a Chinese his title deeds to On High might not be forfeit to childlessness. Ridiculous, isn't it? But does the thought that it symbolizes merit ridicule? Western common sense's ridicule of Eastern vision? Who—of all the West—shall say? And thought—sincere thought —is neither pigmy nor mountebank. Philosophy, progress and morality worth their name are the children of thought. Who shall judge between the clashing thoughts of East and West? West or East? Where lies the true vision and justice? Is it on a Supreme Bench on the bank of the Potomac, in a Law Court at the edge of a buried Strand's bus-tangled, trade-jostled traffic, or in the tranquil mind of some yellow-skinned dreamer who broods beside the pink narcissi that nod near a crystal tree in K'üfu? Taoist, Christian or Pharisee?

None of all which—"irrelevant, incompetent and immaterial," perhaps—was what Tom Drew thought as he stood at the grave of Yo Ki. Awkward self-consciousness swept through him. What was he expected to do or say, he wondered. If Yo Ya-ling wished him to do or say anything, she gave no sign that she did. She seemed to have forgotten him—to have forgotten everything but the grave at which she prostrated herself. Certainly she ignored Drew's presence. She busied herself with some slow graveside ritual that seemed to the American man fantastic, absurd, almost a scandal and sacrilege and

certainly a mockery, and then suddenly seemed to him both pathetic and humanly intense. Whatever did she expect him to do about it? To bend down to the ground when she did—again and again—to moan when she moaned—over and over? She couldn't really want him to do that! He didn't recall that he ever had moaned. He didn't think that he could moan—to order. He'd feel pretty foolish trying it.

And then—he forgot Yo Ya-ling: forgot she was there. He thought of Yo Ki, and the sense of Ki's absolute presence gripped him, caught and held him as it had in mid-ocean.

He thought of the Chinese boy as he'd seen him at Cambridge, and realized, as he had not there, what a lonely figure it was—unbecoming American clothes, yellow face, melancholy queer-set eyes: a Chinese boy in exile standing alone at the edge of the Harvard yard. He wished he had spoken to Ki oftener. He wished he had been kind to him. How would he have liked to have been alone in China, at Ki's age, unwelcomed, dressed in Chinese clothes, held a pariah, if not quite treated as one, by a rollicking herd of Chinese students? —if Chinese students ever rollicked, which, from the little he'd seen of them, he doubted. Probably Yo Ki had been homesick; his eyes had been wistful enough, and so had his voice. And the Chinese boy had died—alone in America. Drew's eyes moistened. He wondered if they had put Ki into his coffin still wearing Boston-made coat and trousers! And shipped him back home so? Tom hoped not.

His months in Shantung had shown him how completely, hideously an exile Ki must have been in Massachusetts; but standing here brought that to him sharp-

ened and clearer. He was glad they'd brought the boy back to his home: glad that Ki lay here among his own people.

He *saw* Yo Ki—in Chinese dress now—standing over there, grave-faced, stern-eyed: Yo Ki in China. Something Drew never had felt before, never had believed that any sane man had felt, crept through him. China had touched him at last. China—and perhaps, too, the grip of Eternity's hand on his shoulder! He shook off almost instantly whatever the chill eerie sensation was, and Yo Ki no longer was there—only Ki's grave in a silent city of graves and a Chinese girl performing her rites at the grave of her brother. He had thought that women couldn't do it. Swift or Thing Fong or some one had told him that women might not perform the *"sacra"*—if that was what they called all the bowings and scrapings and groanings that Chinese dead got. Well, the Chinese woman was doing it! Perhaps it was one of the new privileges that Young China had given her.

But it no longer looked absurd but merely sisterly, pathetic, to Drew.

She had finished her prostrations. But she continued to ignore the man she had brought. She unfastened the rice-braid basket and, one by one, laid on Ki's mound, when she had filled them, nearly a dozen very small bowls. One she filled to the brim with bright yellow wine which she poured from a long, twisted-necked flask; one she heaped with rice and laid chop-sticks beside it in readiness. Drew knew that it was thickly-syruped ginger that she turned from one of the lacquered boxes into a porcelain bowl; he recognized the crystalized mangosteen sections and the finely-cut bits

of chicken and duck, but the rest that she gave he did not recognize. A silver basin of perfumed water was larger than the others, and she laid a fine towel in readiness beside it. He heard the clink of coins in the meshed purse she laid down. Then she placed a pot of lilies beside a book and filled the incense-burner and lit it. There were little paper flags at each side of the grave already. One of these she lighted, also, and when it had burned away she put in its place one that she took from her basket.

She turned to Drew.

"He is glad that you have come here once when I came to worship. And I knew that you would be glad to come. It is one more kindness you, who did him so great kindness in your own country, now have done him in his own country. My brother loved China so much that he went into exile for China, just as you love your country so much that you have come into exile for her."

Drew was too embarrassed at that, to him, new explanation of his presence in Shantung to contradict it just then.

"We thank you again, thank you for this most pious courtesy—Yo Ki and I," she told him earnestly.

She held out her hands to the grave she had plenished and decked; said something in Chinese that Tom did not understand; again kot'owed three times; then took up her basket—the little emptied food-boxes, and the empty flask in it—and went slowly away, but not as they had come.

Yo Ya-ling had brought Drew upon the graves-place suddenly by a little side path that was more a mossy slip between the guarding cypress-trees than a path at all. She led him away by one of the wide ceremonial image-

and-tree-flanked roads that give approach to the burying places of China's great families: long, straight roads of incredible cost that, with their odd gigantic stone sentinels of heroes and beasts and their dark cypress trees, seem hideous to unaccustomed, untaught Western eyes. Drew had not seen a "path-of-those-going-On High" before, and the Chinese Arts that thrilled Walter Swift exquisitely and moved him profoundly left Drew cold, and always would; yet he saw nothing ugly or forbidding in this straight yellow road with its double belts of rough-hewn warriors and monsters and its almost black cypress trees.

Before they had passed the last gray monster—a two-headed elephant with a dragon on its back and a lotus-flower in its tusk—Yo Ya-ling began to chat to him in their old friendly way.

The slight, girlish figure looked "dressed-up," gay, and child-small beside the gigantic gray effigies, and yet she was in the picture—even unvisionary New York eyes saw that—a Chinese girl keeping her Chinese state here in the houseless street of her gods and demons and ancestors. She was as Chinese as her foremothers had been for three thousand years—unchanging, unspoilt, unruffled by all that had broiled and boiled and destroyed and "reformed," from the Opium War and the Boxer Rising, the infamous seizure of Kiao Chōu to the Versailles pronouncement: as Chinese, as unalterably patrician, as the Lady of Si-Ling and "Pearl-of-Pearls" themselves; and yet so entirely and simply his friend and comrade that, as they left the giants behind them and went a little loiteringly across the violet-thick meadow where silver-necked blue birds were singing their noon-song in the mahogany trees, he asked her

a question that had come to him as he watched her worshiping at Yo Ki's grave—asked her because he felt that he might.

"What is your religion?"

"Mine—my individual religion, do you mean, or the religion of my people?"

"It's the same thing isn't it?" Drew said in surprise.

A little laugh tinkled as Yo Ya-ling looked up, and he saw that her tears had washed the paint all off her honeysuckle-colored face. Ya-ling had been greatly moved at her brother's grave.

"The whole includes the lesser, of course, and in China far more truly than in your West," she told him. "But they make a blunder who think that there is no individuality in China—no individuals in Chinese families, no individualism in Chinese life. I think that it is in the closest-knit communities, closest-knit by traditions and customs, that individualities are sharpest and surest and strongest." She bent down and plucked a stem of bell-hung yellow lilies from the grass—there were many more flowers than violets in the meadow that violets almost carpeted—and held it up to him. "See, there are one-two-three-fifteen," she counted, "hanging on their one stem, and see how alike they are and how unlike—more unlike than alike really; harmonious, not monotonous; of one happy family and household; drawing their life from one root, through one stem; drawing their radiance from the same sun, their perfume from the same soil and the same heaven; but each nodding its own little bell in its own little way; living its own life; each with its own pulse and character; each fastened to the one stem, supported by it, fed through it, but free of it. A Chinese soul is not a drop in a

big bowl of soul-stuff, nor a Chinese life, or mind, or conscience. Don't believe that. The West is teaching us—oh—numbers of things''—Drew wondered if her lip curled a little—''but it cannot teach us individuality, for we always have had that and clung to it. Herds have enormous force; but can a herd-mind think, invent? The Chinese man who invented the telescope and the one who invented aeroplanes was as individual as the Scots doctor who found chloroform. I believe what my people believe, in the way I believe it. Code is our staff—we Chinese—not our fetter, and Chinese religion is an expression of many things, not a bundle of edicts. We follow one form, or rather many varieties of many forms; but inside the sanctuary of the old, tried forms each thinks alone. We stand together. We act together. We think alone.''

''Then—if you'll tell me—what is *your* religion, your own?''

''Love and obedience,'' she answered at once: ''love of my parents and kindred, gratitude to them—love that is not grateful is cheap love—love of flowers and all the other beautiful bounties and of gods that give them, love that is sympathy and help to those that need it; obedience to my ancestors and to the sages. We are Taoists and Buddhists and Confucianists and of a lot of other sects, and most of us are a bit of them all—and why shouldn't the soul thrive best, as the body does, on a varied diet?—but I think that to us all love and obedience and enjoyment are the essentials of what you call religion.''

''Enjoyment!''

''Enjoyment,'' Yo Ya-ling repeated decidedly. ''Every possible enjoyment. What you call 'having a

good time' as well as appreciation of sweet things, fine things, strong things. Isn't a religion that does not enjoin joy and being glad, a blasphemy? I am sure it is!"

Drew thought of his Aunt Anne Eliza, and he smiled a little.

"A great deal is said in Europe, and I suppose in your country, of how we toil. I have heard that, but little, if ever anything, of how we play. And I doubt if even one of the few travelers who have told something, an outside something, of how we play, has sensed even remotely what a soul-thing all our frolic is. Our festivals—I have read faithful enough descriptions of them, now and then, in English books, but never a line, word or hint of what they *are:* of the meaning and devotion of which they are but an outer garment. They are all an obedience and a common sense. Obedience is just common sense—obedience to older, wiser experience than ours, obedience to law. We are not a servile people, Mr. Drew; we are patient, but our patience is not a weakness; it is a strength ingrained in us by the courage of ages—the spiritual good-breeding of a people too proud to be impatient or irritated easily or cheaply. We are a glad people, thought glum and sullen because we are not casual with each other and still less with outsiders. To rejoice is our duty. We are commanded to it by all the beauty about us and by all the wealth of our inheritance as a people. Yes, love and gratitude and obedience make up my religion, I believe. You are going back to your own home, before long, I hope"—Tom looked at her oddly at that. "Why?" was on his lips; but he kept the word back—"I greatly wish that you might see us—we Chinese—as we are, before you go, to

take the memory with you, and to keep it while you live. I am very proud of being Chinese. I ought not to care what other peoples think and say of us. But I do! The Chinese races have more good qualities than the friendliest Westerns say of us. Our best they never tell of us and, I believe, never see. We pay—we Chinese. All the world says that of us now, I think. At any rate our history proves it. We pay our debts. Christendom has been the usurer of China—forced us to borrow from her sums that it first has forced us to need—forced us to borrow from her at strangling rates of interest and on conditions of repayment that only Chinese character and industry could have endured. The West has almost throttled us—keeps a strangle-hold on us now—may throttle us to death—extinction—throttle us off the map yet. Shantung has been in pawn to you. Our Shantung is the shuttlecock of the nations: of Germany and now, bitterest of all, of Japan! Japan and Germany are pledged to go; but have they gone? And if they do will they stay away? And you call *us* 'slim, bland-heathen Chinee,' because we do not love the nations that have seized Shantung in pawn! But, even so, we always pay, and we always will while Chinese are Chinese and China China. We pay hate with hate —cruelly. We pay kindness with service and gratitude. We pay love with our very hearts. Our love of you—you yourself—is our grateful payment of a sacred debt. We love you because you loved Yo Ki."

Drew looked away.

He must go on acting the lie they had assumed of him, he supposed. He could not tell Ya-ling that he had not loved Yo Ki, but had disliked and rather despised him —not now, here still in the shadow of the graveyard

where not an hour ago he had been with her while she wept and worshiped at Yo Ki's grave. How could he ever turn around and slap in the face the great friendliness they had given him, a friendliness that her words made him feel he'd stolen? He must go away! Yes; that was it—turn and run—run from Shantung; and with all his father had given him to do there, trusted him to do there, not much more than begun. And so splendidly begun!

Ya-ling was speaking when he forced his mind back to listen; he did not know what she had been saying, or how long he had not been listening.

". . . always must remember that perhaps most of the peoples that have encroached upon us have not meant us ill. I am sure that some Westerns have not, and even some Western nations. I know that your United States has been China's friend—recently—for some time now. And the United States is the one first-class power that has seized not a *li* of Chinese territory; I like to remember that. One owes gratitude, love, to nationalities as surely as one does to individuals."

"Do you—you yourself," he asked her, "have any liking for any of the races you have met, here at home and in Europe?"

"I might—moderately—if I knew and understood them—all but the Japanese," Miss Yo answered evasively.

"Come now!" Drew said, more to hear what she'd say next than for any belief of his own in the Nipponese. "The Japs are very much like all the rest of us—some of them bad, some of them exceedingly good. And this is the age of universal brotherly love, you know. Wouldn't it be a crime of you not to love the Japanese

—at least moderately, as you cautiously put it? They can't help being Japanese, you know."

There was forked lightning in the face Yo Ya-ling turned to him squarely. "It would be a crime for a Shantungese to love any Japanese. Matricide! One does not love him who ravishes his mother."

CHAPTER XVIII

WHATEVER brief Tom Drew held for the Japanese people, he urged it no further. And indeed what the New York papers his father sent told him week by week now was not calculated to move a good American citizen to any partisanship for the Island Empire.

Yo Ya-ling chatted to him happily as they threaded their way slowly past beanfields and peasant hamlets, through the gentle woodlands that are about all the "forests" that tree-robbed Shantung has left her.

Well as he knew the Chinese girl—or believed he did —Drew felt it strange, and it grated on him a little, as her gay gala robes had, that she could make so merry returning from Ki's grave.

Yo Ya-ling caught his unspoken thought as she often did; as most Chinese can when they care to.

"We keep close hold with our gone-On-High ones," she told him with a smile. "I do not know what you do in your States United, but in England they bury their dead *and leave them.* I think they forget them. I am sure they do after a generation, two generations at the longest. I had schoolmates in England that had never visited the graves of their great grand-parents. I

find it difficult to think such a people civilized. It may be Christian, but I cannot think it filial."

"We do not believe that our dead are in the ground—not their hearts and minds," the American defended.

"I did not suppose you did."

"Perhaps," she added after a moment, "the English and your own people have only one soul apiece, one that goes down to the Yellow Springs. That would make a difference," Miss Yo admitted. "Every Chinese has four souls; some Chinese have as many as ten souls."

"I say, that seems a bit complicated to me."

"It is quite simple—as simple as ten toes and fingers. There is the grave soul, and there is the tablet soul. The *hun* soul goes to heaven. Sometimes the gods make it a god. The *p'o* soul goes down into the earth. We live with our gone-on ones as truly as we do with those who live with us in our homes and courtyards. Except in the heartbreak and flesh-torn time of new bereavement and in our year time of mourning, sack-cloths and wailing, it is not a sadness but a joy-time for us when we go to our ancestors. We make of it a festival, find in it a gladness. I wear my fine coat and my crimson trousers and many of my jewels to-day because I go to visit my brother, and because I take to him the friend who loves him and whom he so loves. I like our face-paints not so much as I did before I made my exile in England —for there I saw women paint their long faces not in modesty. But to-day I put some paint on; for I could not do Yo Ki a rudeness. We make a home-going and a play-time for our little children in our tomb-gardens. They make their obeisance with us at the grave-end. They light their honorable incense. Then they fly their kites and dance and laugh and play as we

go back to our life home. The travelers who write in English and other words of Europe so many books about China seem to us Chinese to understand us very little. Many, many pages they print about our 'Ancestor Worship,' but they understand it but the little. 'Great Family Friendship' would be a better name to call it, I think."

Tom Drew had a vision of New England children romping and dancing in a Vermont cemetery, and his Aunt Anne Eliza watching them do it!

He skidded away from the graveside customs of China. "Your *exile* in England. You did not care much for England, I'm afraid."

"I like China better," Ya-ling owned with a slow, cool smile.

"Perhaps you'd like America. I hope so. Not feel an exile in our country."

"I think," the girl told him gravely, "that Yo Ki found it exile and thornsome in your country. He gave no murmur ever when he wrote to us. But I think he was not happy in your country. Only you were ever kind to him at the University—you of all the many who were native there. I feel that he was lonely. Homesick, of course he had to be. But, except for your great friendship and kindness and welcome and fellowship, loneliness ate him. *I felt it*—all the days he was at the Har-vard. It hurt me. It hurts me now."

If Tom Drew had but one soul, it winced at Yo Ya-ling's words.

"I'm sorry," he told Ki's sister lamely. "You wouldn't go to school, you know, and I hope you'd like my country. It's a great place."

"I shall never see it," Miss Yo answered. "I hope never to be sent from our homeland again."

"We never know," Tom insisted, watching her more closely than he realized. There was a great deal that, for all his Yankee shrewdness, Tom Drew did not realize here in Shantung, and there had been since he first had come to the chummery.

"That is true," the girl admitted. "And even the wise-men in the hills cannot tell us everything, or else they will not. But I beseech Our Lady Kwan that when I am married, my honorable lord—"

"I say," Tom broke in, standing quite still in surprise, "you are not engaged, are you?"

"Betrothed," Yo Ya-ling nodded, "I think not. I believe that my noble father will tell me when I am—"

"My God!" Drew had interrupted her again.

"And indeed there are betrothal ceremonies in which I must take a part before it binds us, my betrothed and me. But my father and our jade-flower old one may have arranged it. It should not be delayed longer now; neither my own marriage nor Yo Su's. We grow towards oldness. Su will be sixteen at the *Hua Chao*—is it not beautiful that she, our radiant flower-like one, was born on *Hua Chao,* the flower's birthday?—and this person will be nineteen in a few moons. It would be unkind of them not to wed us soon. And not Yo Z'in Tö or Yo Wing So ever does us unkindness."

The American had reddened miserably. "Have you no idea whom you are to marry?" he blurted out awkwardly.

"None!" the Chinese girl told him indignantly. "We are not Young China to so far the extent as that!" She moved on slowly, and Drew went on with her.

"In the politics, my father is 'Young China,' perhaps—moderately; perhaps not. I do not know. Of Shantung he broods much and plans, I make sure. But, except for Shantung, Yo Wing So spares little time or thought from the fine things: the silks and porcelains, all the beautifuls, music, old books, our gardens. My honorable lord father may be 'Young China' a little in those husk things of life that matter least—most of us are now, it is difficulty not to be—even now I have spoken to you my father's name; in the old day I could not have done that; but for our matters of family we are sash-wearers still and keep to the honorable very old and jade-like way."

"But have you no choice whom you marry and spend your life with?" The American was indignant in his turn.

"Most surely I have. I choose to be married to whom my father decides for me. Yo Wing So is old. I am young. He is wise. I am foolish. He knows men and clans. I have no knowledge—less than the most of our women, because of my years of banishment in an English school-place, where every day was a three coat day, where they knew not how to cook and made me learn the dates of English kings and battles, what they made in a town called Man-chest-ter and one they called Burming-am, what grew in their mid-lands and in the Scotland, gave me the lobster, the scavenger-of-the-ocean, for a great treat, and took me to a Church-place where a man stood on a high board and said rude things of my people—called them "heathens," prayed for them. They passed a brass-tray-thing (it was poor brass) and the mistress, who always sat beside me, tried to make me put my shilling silver piece on it for a foreign mission to

China. But that I would not do, and the school-woman could not make me. She was angry. I was more angry. She took me to her study—where she studied nothing but to make long bills for parents and to make young girls unhappy—and she say bad things to me. I say nothing to her, but I think bad things to her. Oh! my heart sang, and I lived again when the word came that it was commanded to send me back to China—to Shantung."

"But what if you do not like your husband?"

Yo Ya-ling laughed; her laugh was the rippled chime of silver bells.

"That is not possible. I shall not see him—unless by misadventure a peep through the flower-wall—until he lifts my red bride veil; but when he does, I shall like him, and when I have grown into his courtyard as the flowers there I shall like him very much, and when our babies play about my courtyard I shall worship him, and when I bear him a son he will worship me, and his honorable mother will rule me with mildness and order the concubines that they obey me."

Tom Drew's gorge rose.

"It will be soon, I hope," Ya-ling chattered on happily. "Often here women are not married at so young years as in the other provinces. Among the 'babies' often a girl is not given to her new home until she is very old, twenty-four years often, sometimes even thirty. But a girl of the sash-wearers should not be kept husbandless so long. But we all are tainted something with the wild new ways, I think. I do not like them, those barbarian ways. Not for us, I mean," she added quickly. "For those born to them they are the ways most admirable, of course, the ways of your

honorable country and of England. I can see that clearly. The Lady Giggles would not be happy in a high-walled courtyard."

"She'd pull it down," Tom said grimly.

"More apt she fly over the wall!" Ya-ling suggested with a laugh.

For some time they walked on in silence through the willow-walled path of moss and wild flowers.

Perhaps Yo Ya-ling was dreaming of her red bride-chair and of the man who would be her husband when she first saw him—she a bride and stranger in some other province; for her eyes were tender, and so was the red mouth.

Tom Drew's thoughts were not pleasant. His good-natured fair face was set and grim. It seemed an abomination to him that Ya-ling should marry a Chinese; monstrous! Should he speak to the old Yo Z'in Tö about it? She gave him great license, the old grandmother. Would she listen to him in this? Or would he do more harm than good? Even hasten on the unspeakable marriage? Marriage! It was not marriage; it was revolting, indecent. The thought of it sickened him. Ya-ling fastened in a tawdry wooden box, carried by bedizened coolies; going to a husband—a Chinese!—she had never seen! Drums and gongs, fire-crackers spluttering horridly, jibbering peasants chattering, shouting about her; pandemonium! His manhood reeled at the thought! His taste was nauseated. Ya-ling was his friend. He liked her almost as well as he did Molly. He liked her better than he did Maud. In more than one way she was more likable, more sweetly companionable than either Molly or Maud. For one thing, her

sunny good-temper was more dependable. She was miles more interesting than Nettie Walker had been—and he had thought a lot of Nettie; did still. And Ya-ling spoke English, could read English books and talk about them better than he could. Ya-ling wore decent, reasonable English clothes like a lady, and she had her feet! It was a crime to propose to marry her to some beast of a Chink. Something ought to be done about it!

It was many moons—moons of Chinese hospitality—and overflowing kindness—since Tom Drew had thought of any countryman of Ya-ling's as a "Chink." He was sharply stirred. A something of self that he did not understand or suspect, a part of self that never had asserted itself before, was up in arms. Tom Drew had not been so angry since the night in Flanders when he had seen a Hun slash a bayonet into a comrade's brain—a boy from Detroit—and laugh when the blood and gray had spurted out. The German had not laughed twice. Tom Drew had got there.

If Miss Yo read her friend's thinking, as she did so often, this time she did not answer it.

She watched the pathway quietly. She did not look up at her companion even when she spoke, and she did not speak until they had passed beyond the willows, and were, she knew, but two *li* now from the south gate of her father's wall.

"When Ki was married," she began.

"Didn't know he was," the man interrupted her almost sulkily—moody still with his troubled thinking—but for all that spurred into utterance by surprise. "He never mentioned it," he added. It was not strange that Yo Ki had not, since Drew had not spoken to the

Chinese boy more than a dozen times, not more than six words at a time, and had done all he could to stem Ki's flow of speech on each of those ten or a dozen occasions.

"To you at Cambridge? He could not. Yo Ki was not married when you knew him."

"Oh," the American said huskily. It was all he could say. "But— Oh, I see, he married in America; I never heard of it; but men do at college sometimes. A Chinese lady?" he asked politely. There had not been many eligible Chinese ladies in Massachusetts; he was sure of that. Probably it had been a proxy wedding. He'd heard of them—somewhere—medieval Europe, he rather thought.

"Naturally, a Chinese lady," Miss Yo answered proudly. "But not in America. Yo Ki was married after he came home to us."

"Huh?" was all Drew managed to remark, and he did not say it very clearly.

"You do not understand," Yo Ya-ling said kindly. "Shall we rest here a little by this happy brook? We soon shall be at our gate now. We have been far. And I shall like to tell you of Yo Ki's marriage. It was very beautiful. Here is a flat, warm stone for me; there is one more shaded for you." She sat down as she spoke, and Drew took the wider, less sun-baked seat.

"My brother's was a *Ka ssu ch'in* bridal, a dead-marriage. My father could have procured a living girl for wife to Yo Ki; but both Yo Wing So and the old jade-like one thought a dead bride kindest—both to bride and bridegroom. And even for my honorable father it would not have been easy to find a family of suitable rank and ancestry, ready to give a living

daughter to a *Ka ssu ch'in* marriage. You see she must have been a widow for all her life; though, of course, she could have committed suicide."

"I say—" but that was all he did say.

"A maiden of a very great family—of another province and name, and of my brother's generation, of course—was found. She had to be all that; for a man and maid who could not have been betrothed in life cannot be wedded after death. It in every particular must be as the gods of our On-High have commanded. She had died very suddenly while her parents were deciding which of several suitors, whose parents had approached them through the go-betweens, they would give her to. She had been in her tomb when Yo Ki was at the Har-vard. But in all ways she was suitable. And her parents were overjoyed to have her raised to the more honorable status of a married woman. In Shantung the bridegroom sometimes—not always—when he would do her special honor, goes for his bride. Yo Ki went to Shen Si for his bride."

Drew's blue eyes were wide with a question he would not ask.

Ya-ling answered it. "No, not in his coffin. The honorable coffin was too large for any bride-chair, and Yo Z'in Tö would not part with it until the burial."

"Yo Ki, in his soul-card, his *p'ai-wei*—it was paper, white, of course, with his age and his name on it, and *'ling wei'* beautifully brushed—my father did it. *'Ling Wei'* tells that it is the seat of the bridegroom's soul. After all the burial ceremonies are over, the *p'ai-wei* is burned, for then the soul—the *tablet soul*—has been called by its ancestors to live with theirs in the family tablet of precious wood which always the living

of the family guard and cherish and, at the fit times, worship. Yo Ki went to his bride in her red bride-chair. His own green bridegroom's chair—not nearly so beautiful or splendid—was carried behind and empty. It was a wonderful procession. We watched it from the wall-top—watched it go and watched it come, when at last Yo Ki brought his wife home."

"So," Drew ventured awkwardly, "they were married at the bride's house!" He had had no desire to speak; he wished he need hear no more of it; but he felt that some return of words was due to her, expected of him.

Yo Ya-ling smiled pityingly. "You have learned little of China! That could not be. He went to the father's *k'otang*. His bride's family paid him all ceremonies; and he them. But he did not meet his bride. While he was in the *k'otang* the red chair was carried into the harem courtyard, and her women and her father lifted her into it. She was in her coffin, of course, but it was a tiny coffin, and the red chair had been built wide. Her coffin just fitted into it, her red veil about it, her bride-crown on it."

"Holy Moses! had they dug her up?" Drew wondered sickly. And that was just what they had done.

"Yo Ki was attended to the green chair. In the green chair the bridegroom followed his bride to his father's home."

"And things like that are done in China *now?*" Drew asked impulsively.

"It is quicker to take holdings of land and money from us than it is to take our customs from us," Yo Ya-ling answered quietly. "We are a very old people, Mr. Tom Drew; our old ways suit us; we find them good and honorable. The dead-marriage seems horrible to

you. That is no fault in you. To me it is very beautiful. They were married in our *Ch'ih,* where often you have shared our father's hours. They had every ceremony that makes a great Chinese bridal in Shantung. Then we changed our wedding garments, put on our coarse hemp, brushed the ointments out of our hair, tore it, let it hang about us, put away our jewels, took up our woe and followed them to the grave-place. They were buried in the one grave; it is a wife's right. Her name is cut on her husband's stone. Their son died, alas, filling our house again with sorrow and all our courtyards with wailing."

"Their son?" Drew whispered.

"For two things did my august father get for Yo Ki a bride: that she might serve and amuse him in the Yellow Springs and that he might have a son. *That* was the reason of weight and imperative. We could not adopt for Ki a son who would be legitimate, allowed to perform for Yo Ki the *sacra,* unless first Yo Ki was married. Our father *had* to arrange a marriage for Yo Ki. And when the long gray moons of mourning were ended, the wise Yo Wing So adopted for Yo Ki a very beautiful son; we all loved him, and my fragrant mother and our thrice fragrant grandmother were much comforted. But my nephew-one died. And now my honorable father will adopt a son and a grandson, and when the *fêng-shui-hsien-shêng* name the bright, auspicious day they will be brought home to us; and the venerable one will have two babes to dandle in the *Hou T'ing:* a grandson and a great grandson. If the son my father adopts dies it will wrench us; but he need not be replaced, for Yo Ki's son and his descendants can perform the *sacra* both for their father Yo Ki and for their father's father

and for all their honorable ancestors. But if again the son of Yo Ki dies he must be replaced again and again until he lives to beget sons and his sons' sons. It is indispensable."

Drew made no further attempt at comment. He could not determine what to say, though he tried desperately for several moments to think of something not too inappropriately Western. Finding none he fell back on advice Powers Drew had given him often, and always with emphasis: "When in doubt, son, play silence."

Miss Yo smiled, a little sadly, a little wisely, as she rose and shook the creases from her coat and trousers. "The day star is above the oleander hill. It grows rice time. We shall go."

Drew left her at her father's south gate. He walked all the way to the chummery, though he might have had every steed and chair in Yo's stables and chair-house. He preferred to walk.

As he reached the chummery, Pilkington was whistling blithely in the sitting-room. The Englishman was whistling Yankee Doodle.

Drew made for his own room, though at the Chummery, too, it was rice time. As he fastened his own door with a vicious thrust of the strong bolt, Tom Drew —of the U. S. Army in the World War—said a terrible thing bitterly: "Damn Yankee Doodle!"

CHAPTER XIX

FOUR very different conferences on the self-same matter took place a few days later.

It was scarcely daylight when three Chinese asked ad-

mittance at the almost hidden north gate of Yo's curiously rambling old wall. They were not kept waiting —perhaps were not unexpected. Certainly this was not the first or second time they had come together within the last few moons to the least used, least overlooked gate in Yo's wall. As they reached it, it swung in for them, and the gate-keeper bowed before them, without a word, and they passed him without one and went quietly towards the house. Ordinarily there was no gate-keeper at the north gate; it was used so rarely. No servants were with them to announce their titles and merits; they sent no red cards before them to announce their names and crave them admittance. And Lo L'ung offered them no attendance—called no other servants of his master's to attend or announce them or to learn Yo's pleasure for their honorable reception or brisk dismissal. Lo L'ung did not even look at them as they took their way, with quiet that looked almost stealthy, indirectly through shrub-and-tree-cast shadow instead of along the opener path already amber in the sunrise. He rebarred the gate he'd opened for them, after one sharp scrutiny through one of the old wall's open carving's many loopholes, and went back into the low mat-shelter that was his temporary sentry-box beside the gate so rarely sentried.

Yo was waiting for them at an open window; but he did not greet them nor they him, until they had followed him noiselessly up into his very private study; and even then he looked carefully to the inner fastenings of the door-panel before he gestured his welcome.

This was no visit of ceremony. This was business—sharp and urgent: Shantung's bitter, imperative business. There was no self-deprecating refusal to sit first,

no belittling of self, no compliment of others. They sat, gathered close together, without thought or care for precedent.

And the youngest there, K'ung Kuo-fan, spoke first. There is desperate business afoot when that happens in China—or it was so in the old days; and these were Chinese of the old order.

"There is leakage," K'ung Kuo-fan asserted. "Some one outbids us now at each move. Several attempts have been made to bribe Ku Sen An, and last night an attempt serpent-wise was made to flood our new lode, and it must have succeeded but for the vigilance of No Man."

"Germans or Japanese?" Yo questioned. He did not add, "And are you sure?"

K'ung Kuo-fan always was sure. What he did not know he never spoke.

"Japanese," K'ung replied, "I have no doubt, though as yet we have no clue—if it ever be our fortune to find one. But the work was too fine for German work; fat German fingers would have left a thumb print or two."

"We must find the clue, and more than the clue," Fêng Ah interposed.

The others gravely gestured acquiescence.

"Not English?" Li suggested bitterly. Li Pi-Chu's favorite son was the poppy-poison's slave, and Li Pi-Chu never forgot for an hour who had brought opium into China and kept it there.

"The English have much to answer for," Yo Wing So replied. "Our gods will make them do hard penance. Already England is losing her holdings in Asia—especially in China. Her influence in Yangtze basin thrives in a dwindling sphere; but the English buy, they do not

steal. They fight and fight to kill, by day—they do not crawl in the dark."

"The English lord who stays here so long, the lord with a woman who talks almost as much and as frankly as a Chinese woman, lusts for mines and still more mines," Fêng Ah reminded them.

"And says it openly—offers fair payment for all he seeks to buy," Yo Wing So defended.

"There is no fair payment for foreign purchase of an inch of Chinese land," K'ung Kuo-fan said hotly.

Again the others gestured their grave agreement.

"True," Fêng Ah said; "but until we can drive all the barbarians out, and while in our weakness we must have foreign monies and foreign meddlers here, by the Great Dragon's hot fire-breath, it is better to deal, since deal we must, with the intruder who least breaks faith. I dislike the English least."

"It is the United States that promises China most," Yo Wing So said.

"*Promises,*" K'ung Kuo-fan remarked.

"They will fulfil—the Americans," Yo insisted.

"Our children's children will know, not we," K'ung returned.

"You say that bribes have been dangled before Ku Sen An. By whom?" Ah Fêng said to K'ung. "That is our clue, and it should fix in our understanding which of the dozen nationals that are here to fasten on the Sacred Province is seeking to destroy our mine. Establish to whom disloyal leakage drips, and then it should prove not difficult to discover the corrupt who trickles the drops."

K'ung Kuo-fan bent his head. "Not so, venerable Fêng Ah; it has been too cunningly done. A strolling

story-teller approached Ku Sen An first, a passing seller of fried locusts next—both men not of our province, though one spoke our tongue with ease. Each dropped a hint—and when Ku Sen An did not acquiesce, went on, disappeared, and, I make no doubt, will not return."

"They *were* Chinese?" Fêng suggested.

"Ku Sen An is sure of that: one a Cantonese, one of Yu-nan Province he believes; both certainly Chinese."

"H'm?" Fêng still was not convinced.

"Ku Sen An should have pretended to take the bribes offered, or that they tempted him," Yo broke in. "In that much might have been learned."

"Ku would assuredly have been required to give what was asked before he was paid. When he had given, what he gave would have been tested—proved or disproved. Disproof would have cost him his entrails and gained us nothing. And from any lie Ku Sen An had spoken, some truth might have been found in the crucible of deduction. All measured, I judge that Ku served us best by refusing to speak at all," K'ung Kuo-fan argued.

"Eggs addle in every farmyard," Li Pi-Chu exclaimed. "If Chinese can be found to betray China, Japanese can be found to betray Japan. Is it not patriotism to corrupt those who attempt our corruption?" he added softly.

"Undoubtedly," Fêng Ah answered quickly. "But our difficulty lies not in finding which of the Japanese here would trade Japanese secrets for Chinese *yen* and 'shoes' but in learning which of all the 'Dwarfs' in Shantung *knows* what we wish to learn."

For a time none spoke.

Then Li Pi-Chu suggested to Yo, "You, most ancient and spotless, know foreigners of many nations—admit

them to your garden and to your house even. Would it not be a wise sacrifice, as assuredly it would be a great one, if you would admit to your acquaintance some of the Japanese?"

"I will do much for Shantung," Yo Wing So said thickly, and his old face grayed as he spoke. "But to what avail? Could kindness and condescension win a Japanese to friendship for China? Even if we chanced to select those who know what the Japanese plan against us? Can an eagle pick the mind of a worm? A Chinese filch out the thought of a Nipponese mind?"

"A Chinese woman might," Li Pi-Chu insinuated.

Yo Wing So rose from his stool and went a step nearer the balcony that jutted out from his room, as if he craved air.

"Li Pi-Chu,"—Yo's voice was stern and grave—"it is not forbidden a man to hold in close affection the she-things he begets. My daughters are dear to their father, only he ever can guess how dear. A son I must adopt before many moons, lest I rot in an unworshiped grave and so desecrate the sleep-garden of my ancestors. I shall give him a father's love; but closer still this heart will hold the daughters born of my body. Nature decrees and enforces it. And for Shantung I would give my daughters to a vat of boiling oil—but not to speech of a Japanese man. Kwan Yin-ko would not ask that. And, if all the gods asked, Yo Wing So would disobey." His robe rose and fell and his cornelian beads clattered with his bosom's panting; his hands were trembling; the eyes under his scant white eyebrows shot flame; and his voice—strangely soft as a rule—was an angry rasp.

"Li Hung Chang," Fêng Ah reminded him courteously, for the great Li had been friend and was hero to

Yo Wing So, "thought well of many Japanese. He spoke again and again of Ito as a great man and a chivalrous gentleman."

"Sacred be the memory of the most honorable Li Hung Chang." Yo bent as he spoke. "His lowest worm will not question his jade judgment, *in most things.* When he gave Taiwan to Japan, great humiliation though it appeared, he did China inestimable service. But he did not see clearly considering this our Province. That none of us can question. 'I regret,' he himself wrote, 'that I did not let Japan have Shantung with the rest I conceded them in the Peace Treaty of 1885!' From our memory of the great Li Hung Chang we cannot erase that. He meant it in China's service, but it wronged our fragrant Province. He was my venerated friend, and in such times as those even the gods may misjudge and blunder. And this was, as the Peacock-feathered called it, 'a turbulent territory where fanatical Big Fish are bred like rats on a grain ship,' " Yo added sadly. "Li Hung Chang was not without his argument of reason. But a man decides himself alone for his women. My mother—pearl-of-pearls, flower-of-flowers—walked in that garden"—he pointed toward the balcony beyond which the garden lay in all its glowing beauty and verdure, but he did not touch the silk that hung over the balcony's push-back panel—"when she was a bride; she sits in it now. The women of our house have taken their ease there for long generations, have tuned their lutes in the shade of its walnut trees, have suckled their young under its flower-wall, have pulled up the flowers on their embroidery frames beside the lotus pond, have loved it and tended it, have mingled their celestial fragrance with the attar fragrance of its flowers. While the hand

of Yo Wing So can lift a sword or strike a knife, the men of Nippon shall not come to the garden of Yo. No Japanese shall have the speech of my women."

The silk curtain stirred, from a breath that crept across the garden.

"The map?" Fêng requested. They all felt that the words of Yo Wing So were final.

Yo drew a cord from his sash and unlocked a cabinet. He drew out a roll of thick rice-paper: the map of the Benevolent Crane Mine.

Outspread on the floor, they knelt about it, almost whispering as they studied and counseled shoulder to shoulder.

A tiny sleeve-dog scampered in from the curtained balcony, sniffed at K'ung Kuo-fan's skirt, snatched at Li Pi-Chu's sleeve, gamboled about the group of earnest men gleefully—it was just an atom of joyous orange silk fluff—then lifted one wee golden-feathered paw demandingly at Yo Wing So; and Yo, not turning his eyes from the map, found a sweetmeat in his pouch and gave it with a pat on the wee gold-colored head; and the tiny thing scampered out again with a large sweetmeat desperately clasped between the gleaming pin-point teeth of a determined scrap of very red mouth.

Their conference done, the four Chinese rose from the floor and stood gravely while Yo Wing So rerolled and relocked the map of the mine and the country about it.

"It is decided," Yo said, as he turned back to them.

"It is decided," they repeated.

Yo turned, not to the panel by which they had come, but to the balcony that jutted out over a bed of columbines.

"Let us drink the new gold of the day together," he

said, as he pushed the curtain aside. "I long to share with you, my distinguished and most condescending friends, the view of the temple above the wistarias with the rising sun behind it. I never bathe my soul and joy my eyes in its great, exquisite loveliness that I fail to thank the gods On High for the beauty of China, or fail to regret that incomparable Ma Yuan never stood there and looked at that god-painted silk."

He drew the curtain quite aside and drew back himself that they might go before him. And after many protestations they did. Li Pi-Chu (he was oldest) went first and, looking across the garden, caught his breath, choked and wordless with the deep emotion the Chinese feel at the sight of great natural beauty: an emotion that is love and worship and human self at its best, love passing human love for any human loved-one, self-washed and purified, exalted and humbled.

Fêng Ah followed Li, and stood, and felt, as Li did.

K'ung Kuo-fan went with Yo almost beside him. And K'ung Kuo-fan drew back with a quick exclamation of apology, calling Yo's attention with a gesture to the balcony floor—from which K'ung Kuo-fan scrupulously instantly averted his eyes.

A Chinese girl lay fast asleep on the balcony's polished floor—soft cushions scarcely crushed under her delicate weight. N'zö-ping looked up from her sleeve, nodding them welcome with his golden plume of brief tail, and went industriously on nibbling and munching his candied tangerine.

Yo smiled indulgently and pulled the younger man back onto the balcony.

"The monkey has the run of my house," he said with an affectionate shrug. "She often sleeps so. I might

have known she was here, had I not been so engrossed by our urgent concern, when N'zö-ping danced in and out so gaily. Her favorite sleeve-dog adores my little sleepy-head and always pines and whimpers when he is beyond the scent of her coat. Nay—let my naughty red-trousered nap her nap out, and let us look at the silk the day-star is painting for us behind the temple above the wistaria."

They bowed profoundly, all three, at Yo's gracious permission for them to remain on the same balcony as that on which a Yo maiden lay asleep, then went to the utmost railing edge, absorbed in the kindling, changing panorama the sun's imperial brush-work made and shifted over the Shantung hills and the bamboo-encased, copper-roofed white temple above the wistarias of Yo's far-curling, stone-walled garden. And so deep and sincere was their Chinese rapture, so beyond Western understanding or sharing, that as they looked they forgot that Yo Wing So's girl-one lay, all her virgin loveliness at their very feet—all but K'ung Kuo-fan; he never looked again towards where she lay; but he knew she was there, and a thrill of human emotion tingled his veins, shot with a softer rose, the rose of the day's pictured waking.

Among the sash-wearers whose lot it is to live in treaty ports, to journey to them, to mix or to weave in the intricacies of China's international affairs now, there is —of volition or of necessity—not little social compromise. Even K'ung Kuo-fan, the most unalterable stickler there for the ways of Old China, had he met either Miss Yo, in Western garb, at some half-Western function or on the streets of K'ü fu or of Tsi-nan, would have greeted her gravely but frankly, with such make-shift of cosmo-

politan courtesy and manner as he could have mustered had accredited introduction licensed him to acknowledge her presence. At the recent garden-party both Li Pi-Chu and Fêng Ah had had speech of her, and Li Pi-Chu had joked with her in a fatherly way; but here, asleep, in a private part of her father's house, the very thought of her girlish presence was forbidden to them, close intimates though they were of her father's, and though Fêng Ah was the husband of a first wife who by birth was the girl's own mother's half-sister—a distinction of kinship which is not made in China.

The dignity of Yo Wing So's friendship and trust had done them great honor, in bidding them stay. The one return Chinese courtesy could pay was to ignore the girl's presence—forget it—above all neither mention her nor glance in her direction.

They stood a long time watching the picture that even Ma Yuan could not have brushed, and then they went back through Yo's room and out of the house door, back to the half-hidden gate. None of the three gave the turn of an eyelash to what lay on the gay cushions and quilt of down as they turned from the balcony. But K'ung Kuo-fan knew she was there.

Yo had thought to go back to the little balcony, to wait till the child he loved woke, to fondle an hour away and soothe it with her merry, gentle presence and talk. The conference he and his fellows had had, had pressed him sore—as such business always did. Peace was Yo Wing So's element; wrangle and tangle galled him. He never flinched from either when it came; but he never rejoiced in the battle-drums in the lessening distance, as men more warrior-metalled do—never quite understood what all the tumult was about, why it had come, why it must

stay! But he trusted K'ung Kuo-fan now, as once he had trusted and revered Li Hung Chang, and he loyally did what K'ung Kuo-fan requested—when he remembered. A book or a flower seduced such remembering away sometimes.

The sight of a star-clematis mistrained seduced his memory doubly as he went back towards the house door. He clapped his hands angrily—forgetting Shantung's sorrows, for the moment—forgetting that his daughter and playmate slept on his balcony floor. And while he berated a cringing blue-clad gardener, a wide-awake girl slipped noiselessly up from her quilt and sped—N'zö-ping still munching his sweetmeat in her sleeve—like a lap-wing, quiet as thought, through the *ko'tang,* through a courtyard, behind the high azaleas—out of the garden.

CHAPTER XX

DREW had not meant to go to the Yos' to-day. In the first place he was out butterflying, and he had learned that Yo Ya-ling disliked the very thought of such slaughter and shuddered a little at the sight of his net. She never had said so. Intimate as they all were with him now, no Yo of them all ever had spoken a word of criticism to him, or showed it by so much as a look. But, though by no means Chinese-psychic, Tom Drew was Yankee-sharp, and he knew that Miss Yo thought science no excuse at all for stalking, capturing and killing the lovely, harmless flowers of the air, and he made it a rule not to run across her purposely when his net and case proclaimed him on the chase. Girls were like that —some girls, sometimes, even in sensible New York—

he didn't dislike them for it either. His Cousin Maud, for one—he didn't know a nicer girl than Maud—had said some bitterly scornful things to him about his horrid hobby, and he remembered how devilish pretty Maud had looked as she abused him and the sun had flashed on the humming-birds on her deucedly fetching hat. If Miss Yo was over-tender in her sensitive care for all living things of forest, river or air, she was more consistent than Maud, he thought. Not too consistent—she was no vegetarian, and she had shown him where the trout were thickest and least wary in the mountain stream one day—but he never had seen her adorned with slaughtered humming-birds. But he knew that her chinchilla robes were lined with marten and silver fox when the "three-coat days" and the "five-coat days" of winter came. Well, we all were like that, he thought.

Drew avoided Yo Ya-ling when he went butterflying; but he had not abated his butterflying because of a Chinese girl's silent disapproval. Shantung teems with butterflies: no other coign of Earth has more, or varieties rarer and more beautiful. Drew's collection had grown, and grown in distinction during his months in the Sacred Province. He had not neglected his father's business; he certainly had not cold-shouldered pleasant cordial new acquaintances—white or yellow; but every few days he helped himself to a solitary holiday and went after Green Commas and Fritillaries. A man has a right to a real holiday, and of the sort he likes best, now and then—fairly often, if he can afford it.

In the second place, Drew had no intention of spending too much time at Yo's, or of going there too often. He knew that he could not wear out his welcome in that household of brimming hospitality and unstinted friend-

ship. But he had other fish to fry, here in Shantung, and ambition enough of his own, fealty enough towards his father, to intend to fry them just to a turn.

He had found his acceptance by the Yos very valuable —an open sesame to any closed and bolted door in Shantung. And he realized that he could learn more of China, get more really "in touch" in an hour in Yo Wing So's house or courtyards or garden, than he could in a week in Tsi-nan Fu or with Swift or Thing Fong. But there were things he wished to accomplish in detail that he could not accomplish there, and he had neither inclination nor purpose to spend more than a moderate share of his Shantung sojourn dawdling in a Chinese garden.

He liked the Yos—he liked all of them—he thought their house, now that he knew it fairly well, inside as well as out, surprisingly comfortable, fascinatingly queer, and as fetching as the humming-birds on Maud's blue hat. When he'd made his own pile of a million or two quite distinct from his father's waiting millions, he had a notion he'd run up some such a house—just for summer—somewhere on the Hudson—ten or fifteen years from now when he'd married somebody—he had no idea whom—probably he hadn't seen her yet. There was time enough. He'd run in a courtyard or two. He liked them, and they were no end cool—properly built and shaded—when it broiled. And China had no monopoly of broiling weather. New York State could do herself particularly proud in July and August. A garden, of course! Every rich American's country place had "grounds" and all grounds had "fixings." But it would be no such garden as that old caterpillar-shaped garden of Yo Wing So's. It couldn't be done on the

Hudson; not all the money in Wall Street could do it. He didn't believe it could be done anywhere but in China—probably only in Shantung. And he suddenly realized how much he liked that old garden of Yo's and suspected that he was going to miss it after he got back home. Queer! He never had thought much about gardens; didn't think he'd cared for them specially. But, by Jove! he cared for Yo's garden—darned if he didn't! He liked it even better than he did the quaint old sprawling house he'd half copy some day, roofs and all, on the Hudson—unless he changed his mind—and liked it better than he did the Chinese family that had been so kind to him.

It had come to that! Tom Drew of New York—Wall Street into the bargain—had fallen in love with a Chinese garden: a queer old place of twists and turns, fantastic flower-groups, stone seats that seemed to writhe with the dragons carved on them, doll-house bridges, and ponds of fish and great big lilies of the most unexpected colors in the most unreasonable places. What an infatuation for a free-born, normal American man to have fallen for! Funny! It was the funniest thing he'd ever heard of; the consciousness of it shook him bodily and greatly. Tom Drew leaned up against a dignified old walnut tree, and the place rang with his peals of laughter. He laughed so hard that he felt tired and had to wipe his eyes before he shouldered his net again and marched slowly on about his butterfly business.

Drew's luck was out, or perhaps his eye was, for once. He had seen only one specimen he wished to get, and he didn't get it.

He had sandwiches in his bag, and he was hungry.

And no wonder. It was almost noon, the old sun up there and his wrist watch agreed on that—and they both were good time-keepers. Hing made excellent sandwiches and knew how to pack them; but, for no reason of all that he could think of, Drew did not fancy munching sandwiches just then—and he was really hungry. Just where was he? He looked about a bit and gave it up. Not that there were no landmarks—there were dozens—but all were common to many miles of the small part of Shantung Province that Drew knew. That old varnish tree might be any one of half a score of just such old varnish trees with whom he'd made bowing acquaintance between the chummery and Yo's gates. Plain little temples, way-side shrines, the actor's roofed-over booth facing the village temple, larger, more ornate than the temple, here and there a "sacred" tree with its red-rag fruitage of prayers, Confucian pencils, stones inscribed with sentiments of piety or of good luck—all these were as common to all that countryside, and told him as little of where he was, as the millet-fields, the egg-plant patches and the scrub-oaks on which the silkworms gorged. He'd go on a bit; he might meet some one he could question—he spoke Shantungnese better now—or pick up some object that would direct him more particularly than his compass would; he'd go on a bit before he fell back on Hing's sandwiches.

Presently he met a camel and its attendant coolie. Drew had not learned yet to distinguish individual Chinese faces unless he knew them well—it takes many of us years—but he knew the "chop" on the great beast's flank; and the camel seemed to know Drew and gave him "good morning" with a guttural, not unfriendly throaty squeal. And the coolie also seemed to know him, for he

tugged his charge aside more obsequiously than for a stranger European. A Yo camel and a Yo coolie, Drew was sure. Good! Now to air his Shantungnese and to test it. Like most American women, and not a few American men, Drew had a natural gift of languages. He spoke and understood Mandarin fairly comfortably now; but the dialect of the province he had found difficult. Its many resemblances to the Mandarin itself "mixed" and embarrassed him; if it had been more unlike he would have mastered it sooner. The Pekingese speakers usually can understand the Shantung tongue, which is almost a form of Mandarin, but, in many ways calculated to try a foreign student badly, is even more like the language of Nanking than like the soft, liquid speech of Pekin. However, he'd have a shot.

"Are you going home?" Tom demanded.

The Chinese smiled and nodded his head deprecatingly.

"Going away from home?"

The Chinese smiled as kindly and nodded his head as denyingly.

Tom tried it another way. "Where are you going?"

The third reply was identical with the camel driver's others.

"No savvy? Must savvy!" The American fell back on pigeon English.

The yellow face smiled more broadly, almost affectionately. The man, convinced that he understood at last the desire—to him an almost imperial command—of the great white lord, come from beyond the edge of the Earth and whom august Yo Z'in Tö and Yo Wing So delighted to honor, gave a sudden jerk at the rope threaded through the camel's sensitive nose, a jerk that was much more an intelligible signal than the cruelty it

looked, and the great beast knelt lumberingly down on its obedient legs. Tom backed away as far as a prickly hedge made it convenient for him to do. It was clearly evident that the man believed that he wanted to ride the camel. The Chinese was mistaken.

"Not on your tintype," Tom asserted almost as quickly as the camel had knelt at its nose-rope's command. All his native American was suddenly up; U. S. A. alone in heathen China, but at bay, fiercely resolved to ride no bell-hung, painted-face-and-tail camel. Drew thought that the coolie—tall, incredibly strong, no doubt, as the peasants of Northern China preponderantly are—was about to assist him to mount, or rather to lift him bodily on to some sort of perilous perch on that bare, humped gray back.

To do Drew's perspicuity justice, he had guessed correctly. That was precisely what the Chinese was waiting to do. But if he knew as little English as he did of the fauna of Central Park and the tenets of the Methodist faith, the coolie knew an angry man when he saw one. He gave the meek shrug which is the badge of Oriental patience baffled but inexhaustible, folded his hands on his arms under his wide blue sleeves, and waited for clearer light in the perplexity of what it was that the great, though mentally afflicted, white lord did want.

Drew cooled in the other's imperturbable calm, eyed the still *couchant* enormous camel speculatively, and laughed.

"Blessed if I wouldn't, if I wasn't sure I'd fall off," he said to them both.

The camel turned her long neck over her hump and gave Drew a long red-eyed look. The camel-boy stood as immovable and as patient as a rock.

"I've half a mind to risk it." Tom continued to address them—and with increasing politeness. "I might be able to see something I recognized up on your top, Eiffel Tower. I wonder if I could get off, though, after I'd had a good squint from the observation car." Possibly reflecting that if he could not make the camel repeat her devotional pose and could not scramble down her side successfully, he undoubtedly could dismount by the simple means of falling off, he decided he'd do it! He motioned the coolie to confine himself to his own direct business; but the man again misunderstood, and Drew did it with the assistance of the camel-driver: mounted somewhat ingloriously, pushed up by the Chinese hands that clutched and lifted one leg and then twisted its fellow up after it and across to the hump's far side. The camel, at a grunt from the coolie, rose like a bird—but more awkwardly.

It wasn't so bad—at first. Drew was neither comfortable nor composed; but he stuck. But it took all of both his time and attention—not to speak of his nerve—to stick, and very little looking about for recognizable landmarks was done by Drew from the top of the hastening camel. She was even hungrier than Tom was, and she knew where they were going, if Drew did not. She hurried her gait; Drew tightened his clutch. Too good a horseman and (perhaps more to the point) too good a sailor to lose his head, too proud to appeal to the coolie racing beside them—if he'd thought it the least possible use, when he did not—Drew believed that his first (*and last*) camel-back ride would end in diaster, and the sooner it did end the better he'd like it. He had heard that camels were lazy. This camel wasn't. And of no camel would he ever believe it again. Tom clung like

a leech—or tried to. He hugged that swaying, racing camel for all he was worth. He'd have hugged her neck strangle-tight if he could have reached it; but he was wedged in too far astern, and he did not dare move nearer the bow—even if he could without falling overboard, which he doubted. Neck and neck the Chinese raced with his racing camel, raced gasping, panting, streaming with sweat; but he screamed as he ran, inciting her to faster and still faster speed. But Chinese pluck and Chinese legs, even the best of them—up-North ones—know a limit. The coolie winded and slackened. The camel did neither. It quickened and quickened, and heavens, how it lurched! And it tore its halter from an unnerved yellow hand, and left its "boy" behind it, to pick up his breath again when he could, crouched in a giant cactus-like bush. And Drew was alone in China with a camel whom he believed to be running away—a gentle, docile she-camel who hadn't a vice in her blood, or a trick up her hoof, and was picking her way daintily along lanes and roads she knew intimately, making her best way home to dinner. They passed the Taoist nunnery that Drew knew by sight as well as he did his own chummery, and Tom never saw it, or heard the convent bells call the nuns to "rice." Catalpa trees shook as they passed them; the bamboos quivered and bent to the ground; bats, startled from their legitimate daylight slumber, flew in crazy, sightless droves across their way, and one struck Drew's face in its blind, staggering flight, and nearly unmanned him. Wild geese screeched at them. Wilder turkeys jibed and scolded. And the yellow dust they made, choking and sickening the man, would have taken pride of place from a first-class London fog.

There are many fairs in China, but no "county fairs" such as still flourish in many of America's United States —in MacDonough County, Illinois, for instance, if not in Cook County—with prizes for everything from pickles and butter and crochet-mats to works of local art and live stock; but at such a fair in Shantung the camel that carried Drew that day must have taken the blue ribbon for loping. Tom never before had known what the equestrian gait called loping really was. "Mazeppa"—he christened her that later—he was not concerned with nomenclature at the time—went like an alcoholized streak of jagged lightning. And Tom Drew was scared to death. He wrote his mother so the next day; and in all his life he never had told his mother a lie. And it seemed to the American that the vertical activity of Chinese camels exceeded their horizontal. The camel ran, and the camel rose. The running disconcerted Drew the less of the two motions. The beast ran on and on in the same direction and, for good or for bad, appeared to have some definite objective in her long, wise head—not the Yellow Sorrow, Tom piously hoped—; but her up-and-down speed seemed to him absolutely futile, and dislocated him the more: she rose like a rocket and thudded down to earth like a lead-heavy stick, and she had no system about it, either; she did it irregularly. She rose and fell and she bucked—the rider considered it bucking. She snorted and lurched; but always she ran. The one thing she did not once do was to slacken the going, much less pause to nibble the pathside grass. They must have left Shantung long since! Had they entirely crossed China? How soon would they dash into the Great Wall? Or would she leap right over it in one bounding lope? What the devil was over there on

the other side of the wall? Manchuria, or some such outlandish place, he had an idea. He had had no intention of including Manchuria in his Oriental travels. He had no wish to see Manchuria, none whatever. Let the Russians keep the place, or the Turks or Swiss or whoever it was that had it.

No parsonage-born boy can pass through an English or American University without hearing, and possibly assimilating, a certain stock of profanity. Tom Drew was not parsonage-born. Every oath he knew he addressed to that Chinese camel. He invented several new ones—rather crimson ones—on the spur of the imperilled moment.

The camel continued.

There! There it was before them. He'd seen pictures of it. Now he was seeing it! He recognized it at once—from the pictures, and from traveled friends' descriptions. Not so much to look at, after all. But then, those things never were. And it was lower, more decorative, much less martial than he'd supposed.

Perhaps if Tom Drew had known more of China's history, cared more, or had had some idea of what the Great Wall had been and done, of what it meant, what it had stood for, stands for and will stand for when its last crumbled stone has been swept away by the storm winds of Manchuria and Tibet—perhaps if the onrushing camel had had an easier gait—he would have visioned the barrier wonder of the world more intelligently. But he was neither archæologist nor scholar, had small flair for the antique, and neither the moment nor his mood was auspicious or sympathetic.

They'd crash into it in another moment. Could the camel leap it? No; for, by Jove, the brute was slowing

at last—and at the one moment of their acquaintance that Drew would have wished more power to her speed and height of up-spring.

As abruptly as she'd started off on her break-neck race, the great beast slithered down, kneeling motionless except that she nozzled with her great velvet lips a tuft of sweet grass. And O-i-pan threw wide the east gate of Yo Wing So's garden wall.

CHAPTER XXI

O-I-PAN prostrated himself before he thrust his hands in his sleeves and stood quiet and expressionless as if it were as commonplace as millet pancakes to see Drew lord dash up to the east gate on Lord Yo's youngest charcoal camel.

Drew slid off—as quickly as he could with both knees jellied, both legs cramped, and both feet afire with pins and needles. He gave O-i-pan no greeting and no explanation. If a Chinese "silly one" could eliminate all sign of surprise, so could Tom Drew of New York City. And, in international fairness, let it be recorded that the New Yorker's show of calm was the finer achievement. O-i-pan felt no surprise. It was many years since anything had surprised O-i-pan, and probably nothing would surprise him again. O-i-pan took life as it came, took it with indomitable patience, be it Yo Z'in Tö's stick across his shoulders or an undeserved bowl of syrupped ginger added to his meager meal of millet. Confiscate his little, precious store of opium, and uproot every poppy-field in Asia, and you might have

moved him; but even then he probably would not have shown it, and your triumph would have lacked edge. O-i-pan knew his manners. Young China had not "improved" or enfranchised O-i-pan.

Drew sauntered stiffly towards the garden in search of any friend and of food and cool drink, and more intensely thankful than he'd been since the day when Aunt Anne Eliza had not suspected who had broken her most cherished China dog and injured almost beyond decent repair the parlor what-not.

O-i-pan tethered the camel where it lay and left it there until one of the camel-servants came upon it. It was no duty of O-i-pan's to stable or groom his master's camels, and, for all he knew, the white lord might purpose to go as he had come.

Drew went on slowly; there was an anatomical reason. He made for the little rivulet that danced down hill between the azaleas. And when he had reached it, and knelt down and drunk his fill of its cool deliciousness, a slow grin, just a trifle sheepish, broadened the man's good-looking face. What an ass he'd been. The Great Wall! First he grinned, and then he began to laugh and laughed heartily. The joke was on him—and was no worse a joke for that. Few Americans (outside of New England, and there only one special cult of maiden ladies) are without a sense of humor. And Tom Drew had the best and wholesomest of that saving grace: the sense of humor that laughs heartiest and longest when one laughs at one's self. Only nice, sound men, do that —a woman rarely does. The man who laughs at himself and enjoys it can afford to.

What a ride! What a shaking that tall beast had

given him! She was A 1 at bumping, and she'd known her way home all right. Probably it hadn't been so very far she'd carried—and tossed—him, after all.

He wondered how long it would take that fool coolie to walk home. Tom chuckled at the thought and shook himself—as much as he comfortably could—to free his clothes as far as possible from dust. But, after all, it had done but little damage, the clean, gritty, yellow road-dust of Shantung. He was not so very dirty, and when he scanned himself in the clear mirror of a tank across which but a few trails of lotus were growing, he concluded that he was not even unpresentable. That was a blessing, for the first person he met—slave or house-boy or Madame Yo herself—must give him something to eat. That was fixed.

Drew caught the tender tinkling of a lute and made for it. Lutes did not play themselves, even in China. There was some one over there behind the bamboos and hibiscus—one of the women; it was a woman's touch. What was that she was playing? He'd heard it before. What was it? Pretty! He was not so famished that he did not stand quite still to listen.

A dance tune may sound like a sacred voluntary, played so by a skilful church organist. A change of time, variations not illegitimate, disguise melodies without changing them.

Surely this was something he'd heard very often. What the dickens was it? The fingers picking at the table-lute quickened.

It was "Yankee Doodle."

Yankee Doodle played in China! Some Chinese woman was playing Yankee Doodle on a toy table-lute in this old Shantung garden.

Know it! Yes, he knew it. He had whistled it before he knew securely whether Adams had succeeded Jefferson or the other way about, and before he could have ventured to enumerate correctly the thirteen original States. His father had whistled it to him in his cradle. Tom didn't remember that, but it had left its record. Incidentally it was the only tune that Powers Drew knew even remotely, even when he heard it. Tom always knew whether the tape machine was spelling out hallelujah or deep predicament from the tempo in which the father whistled Yankee Doodle.

Tom Drew's patriotism was more a sturdy of-course thing than a sentiment, as much, and perhaps most, American patriotism is: more ethical than emotional and somewhat, too, a personal pride or challenge flung out hotly—even at times a trifle sourly—to all who presumed to question America's superiority: a younger nation's resentment of older people's criticism real or oversensitively imagined: more temper than love. But rollicking old Yankee Doodle *thrilled* him oddly now. Know it! Yes—he knew it. Only Heaven knew how many miles he'd marched to it in Flanders, knee deep in mud, ankle deep in blood and tortured human flesh. It had been the best marching tune of all the Allies—they all had said so. It had beaten the Marseillaise and even Tipperary. Yankee Doodle was the "onward soldiers" of the great band of many nations that had flung their all into the fight for decency and sanity—fought to save Earth from Hell-on-Earth. It was the battle hymn of Earth's greatest Republic. By George!—and now to hear it here—played by Chinese fingers in Earth's youngest Republic—(Drew did not greatly study small European news)—and the Republic his was pledged to

defend and befriend. The American man's patriotism flamed high—a living flame as it had never been before, white-hot and quivering.

He went on very quietly, and a look that Nettie Walker never had called there, not at her cutest, or sweetest, came on the American's face, as he parted the bamboos and stood watching Ya-ling, sitting where he first had seen her—dressed in her own Chinese garments, playing Yankee Doodle on her little ivory table-lute, playing his home-tune as if she loved it—a far-off look on her delicate, pomegranate face, a tender little smile on her girlish mouth, an odd look in her woman's eyes—almost a look of coming tears—as dew softly blurs little wild flowers before it falls.

Where had the Chinese girl heard Yankee Doodle? Her school-days abroad had been all in England. Yo Ki had not lived to come home and teach her Yankee Doodle. And England had not hummed it when she was at school in England. Who— Oh—of course, he had whistled it and hummed it often. It was the tune that came to his lips oftenest—and when he was gayest or most bothered, when he was thinking hardest, he was very apt, he knew, to hum Yankee Doodle—just as his father was.

Ya-ling was playing very softly now—Yankee Doodle was no marching tune—no battle song. It was a lullaby—a tender, brooding, soothing thing a girl-mother might croon to her first baby, as Ya-ling was playing it now. Then the girl's slender fingers gripped the lute-strings more passionately, and the notes throbbed. The throbbing was both sweet and plaintive, but it stung Drew lightly, queerly; struck an unsuspected chord of self that answered—throbbed softly. Queer! Yankee Doo-

dle never had done that to him at home or in Flanders. It was a love-song.

Odd that Yankee Doodle should sound a love-tune! But it did now—as Yo Ya-ling was picking it from the silver strings of her inlaid Chinese table-lute.

The girl looked up and laughed at him as he went to her; her fingers didn't stop or falter, but they quickened gaily; and they gave him saucy welcome—the girl's dancing dark Chinese eyes and the old Yankee tune. It was a dance tune now; careless, soulless.

"Didn't know you knew it," Drew told her as she folded her hands in her sleeves.

"But I am not deaf, Mr. American."

"Can you pick out by ear any tune you hear?" Drew demanded as he sat down on her long bench.

"Any simple little thing like that. And it is very catchy, your favorite tune. What is it called?"

"Yan-Kee Dude-Lee," Ya-ling repeated after him. "I shall like it always for its nice Chinese name."

Drew suspected that he should too—in the coming years, and remember not unkindly a Chinese garden, and perhaps a Chinese voice—in Wall Street and at Newport. And possibly he was none the worse an American for that, since his virile young country has more or less adopted old tottering China, and means to see its cumbersome ward through somehow.

"By-the-way," he said, without longer delay, "I am hungry—"

Miss Yo sprang up, but before she had moved from the bench a woman servant came hurriedly through the yellow oleanders. And, "Send her," Drew commanded, "and stay where you are."

The woman came at once when Ya-ling motioned, but

the mistress saw that the maid came reluctantly. And even the man, not versed in Chinese faces, and little interested in Chinese retainers, thought that she went back towards the house without enthusiasm.

"She did not approve of your order, did she?" he asked.

"Nee Lay Pin's approval and disapproval do not count," Miss Yo dismissed it with a shrug. "But something is wrong with her lately—and it does count. I *must* find it. She was going somewhere, and she hated being turned back. I wish I knew to where."

"Why didn't you ask her?"

"She would have lied—if she did not wish me to get the knowledge."

"But I thought all your servants were devoted, and quite trustworthy!"

"Most of them are; not all of them. And Nee Lay Pin, she is not my servant. Would you know Nee Lay Pin, if you saw her again? Would you know her on the street in K'üfu, or some elsewhere not here?" Yo Ya-ling added suddenly.

"I don't think so. And they all wear the same clothes, you know."

Miss Yo left it at that.

Drew wondered whose servant the woman was; but he did not ask. And Ya-ling spoke of other things until the food she had sent for was brought: fried rice-birds, pickled bamboo-shoots, a little pyramid of apricots and cherries, citron tea, a blanc-mange of nuts and a jug of Shantung's yellow wine.

The servants waited while he ate—a silent, blue-clad group—Nee Lay Pin and the two house-boys who had come back with her.

"Need they wait?" he suggested, as he picked his second rice-bird.

Miss Yo threw them a gesture—the two boys disappeared towards the house, but the woman slipped back into the oleanders.

"I should know her now anywhere," Drew said, "unless she has a particularly perfect double."

"If you see Nee Lay Pin anywhere but here," Miss Yo leaned a little towards him, "will you notice just where it is, notice if she is with any one, which way she is going, anything you can; and tell me—not any one else?"

"Yes; I'll be sure to."

"Even if it was she wore not her native dress?"

"Trust me. I'll know her."

Ya-ling leaned back against the bench a trifle wearily—but she said nothing more, made no explanation. But Drew had no idea that it was because she did not trust him. He knew that she trusted him. All the Yos trusted him; or if, of them all, there was *one* that did not, he had never suspected it.

"I want you to help me decide something," he told Miss Yo when he had finished his lunch.

The girl's face kindled.

"I want to tell Lord Rutherford something that I feel a sneak not to tell him. It is a thing my father told me to keep particularly quiet. I have written home, and told him just how I feel about it, and why I think that I ought to be as open with Rutherford as he has been with me. And I am pretty sure he'll write back, "Go ahead," but I only wrote a few weeks ago, and my letter is only just about in New York now. It will be a long time before I hear—a longer time, if my father is off on

one of his long business trips,—Canada or Mexico or California as likely as not, and jumping about so that his letters are not sent on to him—just the gist of them phoned or wired. And my letters to him would not be opened by any one while he was away. And I want to tell Rutherford *now*. I believe that I ought to."

"But you must not!" Ya-ling exclaimed almost fiercely. For the first time Drew had shocked her. He had shocked her terribly, and she showed him that he had. Her usually gentle voice was sharp with anger, her narrow eyes were widened with horror and were hurt and disappointed.

"You don't understand . . ."

"I do not need to understand, or wish to," Ya-ling burst out. "You must not disobey your father. Betray your father's confidence! To think of it is monstrous!" She edged still farther away from him, as far as she could without rising.

"Look here, Miss Yo, you think I came to China to get butterflies—especially a Cherry Beauty, don't you?"

"No. That is just your hobby. I never thought you had come to Shantung to catch butterflies—nor to see us. You did not know where we lived, or which was our family name. When you ran across us by accident, you were glad to see us, for Ki's sake—"

And now Drew did not wince. He had grown strangely tender to Yo Ki's memory of late.

"—but we had less to do with your coming here than our butterflies did. Nor did you come to travel or to sight-see. You have scarcely been thirty *li*—not often—from here since the day you passed by Sang Bo asleep at the west gate—that's a long time now—and our

'sights' you care for nothing. I doubt if you know a *pai fang* from a pagoda."

"Oh, I say; I am not so bad as all that!"

"I'm sure you do not know a *fu-mu-kuan* from a *hsien-jen*. Do you? And do you know a Chinese from a Manchu?"

"Of course, I do," Drew told her indignantly.

"Then you are very learned—for a foreigner," she retorted.

"Why do you think I came to China then?"

"To get hold of a Shantung mine, probably."

"What makes you think that."

"Every one who comes to Shantung comes to get something, to take something away," the Shantungese answered sadly, "and," the girl added rising, "usually it's a mine or part of a mine."

Drew followed her across the verbena-speckled grass. "You have guessed it, Miss Yo. It's not much I know about mines or mining. But I was sent here to buy, if I could, a certain patch of mining claims. Rutherford makes no secret that he is trying to acquire a certain mine, and I believe, from something I heard yesterday, that it's the very one that my father and his partners want. They've been no end kind to me—the Rutherfords. Our interests are going to cut across each other sharply. Either he'll dish me, or we'll interfere with him. And I feel that I am in honor bound to put Rutherford wise—or to clear out."

"Clear out then—if your father left you at the liberty to; tell any one what he confided to you as a secret you cannot do."

"It's awkward, but I'm afraid I've got to. A man

must use his own judgment in a thing like that. I'm almost thirty, you know."

"What has that to do with it?" quick came the Chinese retort. "Nothing at all! You must wait for your father to decide it for you—no matter what thing happens in the meantime."

"You think that I have no right to do what I'm pretty sure my father will send me permission to do when he gets my letter?"

"You must wait until you *have* his entire permission."

"And if I conclude that I cannot—and make a clean breast (in confidence) to Rutherford, shall I lose your friendship?"

"You will never lose my friendship," Ya-ling answered gravely. "You can never lose the friendship of any Yo. It is yours forever. But, I should despise you—and grieve—if you disobeyed your father."

"That decides it!" Tom laid his hand on her sleeve.

Ya-ling's eyes fell at something he did not know that his had said.

"The Japanese will prevent you both from getting what you want here," she said decidedly, lessening the space between them a little, as she leaned towards him, almost whispering, "both you and the English syndicate, if they can. And their power in Shantung is enormous still. They hate you, Mr. Drew, all you Americans, and their friendship for England is pretense—'cupboard love' at best, if not something much worse. We wish to keep our mines; but if we are forced to sell, we would rather sell to you—to Americans—than to any English. Lord Rutherford will not get an inch of the Benevolent Crane Mine, I think. No one in your West has at all

the idea what great wealth still is in China. Almost every small town even—certainly every *fu* town—has at least one millionaire family. The countrysides have very many. Yo Wing So has many 'shoe'—perhaps even a million *yen* he cannot count, land and holdings in Shantung and in richer provinces; he has treasure in safe cellars. The last thing that is not ancestral or of great art worth with which my honorable father will not part, if he can help it, is his right in Benevolent Crane Mine. He holds it in his mind in trust for Shantung. The English lord will get no part of it. But my father would give it to you—much as it would cut to his quick to see it pass to any not Chinese owners—for you kept disgrace from our family, and he loves and venerates the family even more than he does our sacred province. But he too has partners—Chinese partners. They will neither give nor sell, while they can command a *yen* to hold on with. And we ourselves will destroy the Benevolent Crane before the Japanese shall get it."

Drew went red with astonishment. "Your father! His partners! The Benevolent Crane is owned by a man named F'ai Pong-fo in Tsi-nan. And why do you think it is the Benevolent Crane that Rutherford and I both want to get hold of?"

"The cherished secrets of foreigners fly faster in China and drop more feathers than that the wild geese do when the snows fall. And my father and his partners *are* F'ai Pong-fo."

"But I have met F'ai Pong-fo!"

"He is our figurehead, our straw-man. It is our mine you are trying to buy, Mr. Tom Drew. You can. No

one else could. I have known for some time that the Lord Rutherford's syndicate wanted it. And if it is not the Benevolent Crane that you yourself want, why have you stayed so long time just here? Why do you so often happen near it when you go butterflying. All Shantung is full of butterflies; but the Benevolent Crane is the only gold mine very near here—and the only one that has greatly interested you—you have stayed on and on here because of the Benevolent Crane."

"Not entirely," Drew spoke impulsively, and he spoke more emphatically than he realized. "I shall not try to buy anything that your father is unwilling to sell," he added hastily. "And really I was sent here more to look around generally, than to do any one thing. My father's firm is a big one—it has ramifications in many countries. I shall not attempt to buy any share in Benevolent Crane, Miss Yo."

"Your father—" the girl began—

"My father is all wool and a yard wide," Tom Drew asserted proudly. "I'm green at this part of his business yet—kid-green. I was surprised when he sent me here; I am yet. But he told me to size things up, and to report rather than to act. When I saw need for quick action I was to use my own discretion—if I didn't think it prudent to cable. And in all his life my father never asked me to do a mean thing. I would not buy a foot of your mine, not if the title deeds of all Broadway went with it."

"What is the Broad-way?"

"The Street that licks creation," he told her with a laugh.

He had not supposed that there was any one on Earth who had never heard of Broadway.

CHAPTER XXII

DREW went back to the chummery through the sunset, but as he went he saw little of the gorgeous pageantry in the sky. For years—perhaps even in boyhood, and in spite of his keen interest in butterflies—bricks and stones, city pavements, human interests had appealed to him, interested him far more than nature did. Seven months in China had modified it—he had caught something of the essence of beauty-worship among the flowers and leafage, the old tree-trunks, the lilied silver ponds and the vistas of Yo's old Shantung garden; hills and meadows, blossoms and buds, the painted wings of birds, the lacquered, jeweled backs of beetles, the ever-shifting poem-picture of the sky meant more to him now. Nature had breathed her mystic perfume into his bustling spirit, softened and sweetened it—but he was still a city man at core; practical, keen as mustard, no dreamer of dreams, and he looked at his watch more keenly than he did at the blood-shot green and rose and citron of the sunset. He rode home swiftly. Yo's horses were always his for the taking, and always one bore a Western saddle now, and wore no fantastic adornments or bells—and as he rode he was thinking hard, not of mines. Now and then his face softened, once he smiled, but most of the time his face was tense, his blue eyes troubled, his good-natured mouth a little hard. He kept a firm hand on the bridle—a firmer on himself perhaps—and he did not whistle or hum as he rode briskly from Yo's gate to the chummery steps. Drew was thinking hard—and it vexed and puzzled him more than it surprised and pleased.

Drew had tea on the verandah—alone; the other three were out. But Hing put three envelopes beside his master's plate. Tom frowned a little ruefully at one envelope—Nettie Walker's; he didn't feel particularly like reading her letter just now, and he saw that it was a fat one. That meant he'd have to write Nett a longish letter in return, and he'd never felt less like letter-writing in his life than he had lately. And Nettie always insisted upon having her letters answered at once by any man who hoped to have their correspondence continued. He was not at all grateful to her for having written so soon again. The second envelope was larger, thinner, snow-white, almost vellum—evidently an invitation. What was the good of sending him invitations all the way from New York! He did not know the writing—but he did the stamp and the long wavy postmark. They could wait; but when he had tasted his tea, and selected a cake he ran a finger through the cable envelope. The cable might be important.

It was—to Tom.

He was grateful to his father when he had read it. Powers Drew had cabled in reply to Tom's letter. That was good of him—and perfectly unexpected. It was very good of his father.

The cable read: "Regret what you tell me. Play the game of course. Give your friend as square a deal as you feel you ought. Don't be soft. Leave it to you."

Tom gave a long breath of relief.

He knew that he would have kept his promise—made or implied—to Ya-ling—would have kept it at all cost. But it would have troubled him more than a little, after what he'd gathered a month ago, to have gone on keep-

ing Giggles in the dark when Rutherford had been so frank with him, and both of them so friendly.

He'd go to K'üfu in the morning, no matter how hot it was—no business to come to China if you funked a little blistering—and tell Giggles all about it.

Giggles and Mrs. Giggles had a bungalow for a few months at China's Mecca; Walter Swift was there with them for a few weeks, lured from Tsi-nan Fu by K'ü-fu's nearerness to the fans and silks and ivories of Yo Wing So, Tom believed.

But Drew did not have to go the few *li* to the Sacred City; two rickshaws ran up to the chummery ten minutes later, and Rutherford himself and Swift were in them.

"Walter's come to spend the evening," Rutherford explained when they had refused tea and accepted pegs. "I'll pick him up on my way back. I'm going farther in a little. I don't want to get there until it's darker though. Is Yo Wing So at home, do you know? Been there to-day?"

"Arrived there about one, in the prettiest Charlie Chaplin picture shown yet. Asked for lunch—and got it. Had it in the garden—didn't go into the house at all; and I am not sure whether Yo is at home or not. I didn't see him—but I don't sometimes. Great Scott, I've lost my best net! Must have dropped it when I was filming the greatest picture yet. Never thought of it till this moment. And I wouldn't have lost that net for fifty dollars."

"I'll send a man to you to-morrow before tiffin that will make you the best net you ever had for three dollars —and make it quick," Swift said.

"Perhaps you will," Drew replied gloomily. "But that net suited me way down to the ground. The handle was It, for me."

"The chap I send will fix you all right," Swift insisted.

Tom said, "Thanks," but his voice sounded doubtful. He turned to the Englishman. "If you hadn't blown in here, I should have gone to K'üfu to see you in the morning. Got something on my chest I want to pass over. It's this. I am not just lounging about Shantung —and it's time I told you what I'm up to."

"I don't see why you should," Rutherford said cheerfully.

"You will in a moment."

"Am I in the way?" Swift asked.

"No, you are safe for both of us. It's I that am in the way—or might have been; but I've about made up my mind not to hang on here much longer. Rutherford, have you ever wondered what I was doing here? Why I came?"

"Not particularly. Glad to have had you here—that's about all." But he did not add that he hoped Drew would change his mind about going. He had been glad to hear that Tom Drew thought of going—Walter Swift was more glad.

"I came here to size up things—conditions—probabilities—all that—as well as I could for my father—and incidentally to get hold of mining concessions for him and his group. I was sent over here to try to do what you came over to do. You told me what you were here for. I kept quiet. And I felt more and more uncomfortable about it. I had to in a way, but I never felt right about

it. Made up my mind about a month ago that I was going to be as frank with you as you had with me—or quit; clear out."

"My dear Drew," Rutherford exclaimed, "that's ridiculous. I have made no special secret of my mine mission here; it didn't seem feasible when I was trying to buy from a dozen different vendors. I told you just as much of my business as I cared to have you know. There is no earthly reason why you should tell me any of yours."

"Mine is chiefly my father's, and his friends'."

"Precisely. But if it were your own only, there would still be no reason for you to tell me a word of it. What I am trying to accomplish about mine concessions is the less important of the two things I'm after here. And if I were after mines, and after nothing else, there's room enough for both of us. There is more than one mine in Shantung—more than one needing more capital, foreign outlet, better management, or to be had at a stiff enough price."

"There is only one Benevolent Crane."

Swift flicked the ash off his cigar with a careful fingernail.

"That is undeniable," Rutherford assented slowly. "And we both are out to get it. One of us may have the luck to. I shan't grouch if it's your luck to land it; and I'm sure you won't grouch if I do the trick."

"I want you to get it, if either of us does," Drew said quickly—and neither of them could doubt his perfect sincerity. But Walter Swift wondered what the older Drew would say to this! And, deeply attached to Rutherford as he was, cosmopolitanized, a little dispa-

triated even, Swift's sympathies were with Powers Drew. And he believed that it was America's turn in China, if only she did not bungle it!

"But," Tom went on, "that is not why I am going away—if I do. That's another story." Neither of his listeners made any comment. And again neither of them doubted his word. "Frankly I'd rather no one got the Benevolent Crane, and I don't believe you will. I don't believe F'ai Pong-fo will sell."

"I am sure he won't," Rutherford remarked quietly. "It isn't his to sell. I am not sure who really own it. But I am going to Yo now to warn him to warn them that it is in danger. And I am going to ask him for a piece of information that I want very much more than I do the title deeds of the Benevolent Crane. And it's time I went. One thing to you before I go; you are not to let what your father sent you here to do go by on my account. That *would* spoil our friendship—and I value it."

"I'll find another mine—no fear," Drew said stoutly —"or something even better. There are more gold mines over here than are underground, and I suspect richer ones. I'm going to look farther afield than Shantung—before I decide—or advise them to in New York. They have given me a pretty wide margin, and when I've found the right thing, I dare say we'll be able to buy it. Most things here can be bought now, it strikes me."

"Except in Shantung," Swift told him.

"But can they hold Shantung?" Drew asked it anxiously, the other men noticed. "Things in Shantung look mighty mixed to me."

"Things are—and all over China," Walter replied. "But I am betting on the Chinese people—when they

have pricked a few of their political gas-bags—and if only England does not play too persistently into Japan's hands."

Rutherford hesitated a moment at the steps; and then came back.

"Drew, I am going to warn Yo Wing So against a Japanese plot that is very nearly ready to engulf him, and to spoil the Crane, if not seize it. I cannot learn who owns the Crane—really owns it; but Yo knows. Chinese own it; I'd gamble all I have on that. Perhaps Yo Wing So will tell me who the responsible owners are —perhaps he will not. It is money wasted to bet on what a Chinese will do, until the numbers have gone up —and then you know, and it's too late to bet. At any rate, I can convince Yo that the Benevolent Crane is in peril, and something that is *his own* in peril too—if—if hang it all, I *dare* say it to his face. If I funk it—I may —it will be your turn."

"I'll be ready," Drew promised grimly. He added, "I'm not out to buy the Crane now—but I am all out, and then some, not to see it stolen from—its Chinese rightful owners, or spoiled for them. I'm your little man when you want me. But Yo will listen to you all right. Why, man, Yo Wing So is easy, as easy as eating peaches."

"No Chinese is 'easy,' " the Englishman asserted.

And Swift added, "Hear! Hear!"

"Well—so long! I'm off now to have a shot. If I funk it; it will be up to you."

"I'll shoot like hell, when you tap the drum, and you've given me my bearings."

"That's understood then. Yo may not believe me. But you can say anything to any of the Yos. And I

don't want to see Yo outwitted by a bunch of Japanese blacklegs. I'll be back sooner or later. Don't let Walter drink all the whiskey—keep me a peg."

"Right!" Tom promised.

"Do you think Rutherford is right?" the younger American asked as he refilled the other's glass.

"Eh?"

"About some Jap plot to injure Yo?"

"It is my experience," Swift replied, "that wherever three or four Japs are gathered together, the chances are, seven to one, that some sort of hellish plot's being perfected. And I don't recall many mistakes that Rutherford has made. And he is particularly careful what he *says*. It was news to me, what he said just now. I knew he was going on to Yo's, and that he intended to see Yo alone, if he could see him at all to-night, but I had no idea what about. Rutherford thought well of the Japs when he first came here, but he has changed in it—swung round sharply—I've noticed of late. He went so far one night at the club as to say openly that he wished England had never blundered into an Anglo-Japanese alliance. I suspect a good many Englishmen feel that way now."

"They're pretty well hated at home."

"More than they deserve I think. I don't like them—and I have not met many of them I'd trust. But there *are* honorable Japanese. Ito was one. You couldn't trick Li Hung Chang—at least no Asiatic could—and he vouched for Ito to the last. Oyama hadn't a single soiled card up his sleeve. And Togo was man and gentleman all through. There are scores of others. But take them all in all—rank and file—I consider the ethics of Sing Sing a grade better than those of the modern

Western-veneered Japanese. And yet their art is exquisite, and their love of it is sincere. They are the most provokingly perplexing people on Earth. Even here in Shantung, where we see them at their worst, there is a great deal to be said on Japan's side, a great deal that is not weighed as it should be in either Washington or London, and that, naturally, gets little sympathetic consideration in Pekin or Shanghai, and least of all here in Shantung. Self-preservation is as first and as righteous a law of a nation's life as of an individual's. Japan must get territories or perish. They are overlaying each other now—what they'll do in another century is hideous to think of—to an outsider; to them it must be maddening; enough to debauch any people morally, if they do not find new ground for their terrible surplus of population. The greed of Japan is not without pathos—nor even in their ruthless, fiendish trickery."

"Let them colonize the Sahara or the North or South Pole," Drew snapped—"there's room there; but it is an outrage that they should stay on in Shantung—even one of them—the Japanese never had any business to come into Shantung."

"So the Shantungese think," Walter Swift remarked quietly, as he leaned towards the fading light, to roll a fresh cigarette—but as he did he threw a quick shrewd look at Tom's face. He had lost touch a little with his own country, but he still read men almost as well as he did books and pictures and enamels; and found it almost as interesting.

"It remains to be seen," he said through the half instant of gloaming which is all the pause between daylight and dark that the Orient knows, "what the end of the Shantung Question will be. It will not come in my

day, I think, or even in yours. But I am inclined to think that you'll get your way about it about a century after your body 'lies a-moldering'—inclined to think that the Japs will get out of Shantung, and stay out—whether to China's ultimate advantage or not is another and a darker question."

"Oh yes,—it's a moot question," Swift insisted, at Tom's exclamation of surprise. "Li Hung Chang didn't think that Shantung was worth keeping. He didn't grudge Japan Korea either—not much more than he did Formosa. Li danced with joy when he'd loaded Formosa off on to Japan. You can't make Yo Wing So—or any other true blue Shantung man see it, of course—and they are all true blue—but old Li was as shrewd as any American; his arguments are worth pondering. Ever read his life?"

"Lord, no!"

"I supposed not," Walter Swift said gently. "It is worth reading. Among a perfect Niagara of balderdash and soppy piffle and gas-bag ignorance about China and the Chinese that printing-presses belch out all over Christendom, there are quite a few books—in English—printed on those big intricate subjects quite worth reading, if you cared to."

They smoked on in silence.

Swift broke in—apropos of nothing. "Ever read any of Li Po's poems," he asked idly.

"Yes—several. I know one of them by heart," Drew returned promptly—glad to pay Walter out—as he thought. So Walter took it for granted he'd never heard of Li Po.

Walter Swift smiled at the new moon, just coming up over China. So Tom had learned *"Gazing at the Moon"*

and "*Thoughts from a Thousand Li*," by heart—in Yo's garden, and probably also the "*Song of the Snapped Willow.*" Just as well if he did go back to New York—or off to Patagonia, and the sooner the better.

Swift had learned what he'd come to the chummery to find out, if he could. He wondered how soon Rutherford would be back.

CHAPTER XXIII

RUTHERFORD and Swift were half-way back to K'üfu when Osuro pushed back the *sogi* and bade Kogo bring *saki* and peach-cakes.

"There is nothing more to be said," he told the two other Japanese sitting at the table where the room's one lamp burned, as he went back to them, "nothing more to do, except wait quietly, until we know how it works."

"You think Yo will yield?" Matzuyama asked, not for the first time or for the fourth.

"I think Yo will yield. I think that he loves her better than he does Shantung. I have no doubt at all that he loves her much better than he does a gold mine. If I am mistaken in that, I am sure that his old crow of a mother will make him yield. Since the incomparable Ki kicked the bucket, as our refined friends say in their own model republic, the girl has been the idol of her crazy old head. Yo will sign, for the old Yo beldame will make him. Yo will sign, and when Yo has pressed his chop down, Benevolent Crane will be ours."

"You will be greatly rewarded in Tokio!"

"I hope so," Osuro owned.

"And when he has signed we go at once?" Naghiki asked.

"Immediately. We will give Yo no time to rouse the 'Sacred' Province."

"I pity the girl when Yo gets her back," Naghiki laughed, "or I should if she were not Chinese."

"She *is* Chinese," Osuro reminded him. "But Yo will not get her back. And, if he did, he'd not dare harm her. The old she-cat would torture and curse him."

"Not get the girl back!" Matzuyama exclaimed incredulously. "How can you manage that? Yo will make sure that he *will* get the girl back before he puts his chop on."

Osuro motioned Kogo to put the liquor and sweet cakes down, and go. "I shall manage it. I have garments of hers here, garments Yo knows well. I have a girl of her exact height, not unlike her in face—seen from a distance, stowed away somewhere here—"

The others laughed.

"No," Osuro said with a shrug. "She is Kogo's plaything—not mine, until we need her. She will be ready when I need her. Yo will see her, from just the wise distance—he will see her, and when he does, he'll sign and go to her as fast as his toad legs will carry him."

"And you will take her with us—a burden and a danger!" Matzuyama exclaimed.

Osuro showed his teeth wickedly. "The girl is pretty. She is empty-headed, as all their women are. Most women everywhere are that—many of ours are—but even for a Chinese girl this one is particularly brainless. But she is a dainty picture, and her skin is like a yellow

almond flower's. She'll be no burden on our journey. Her silly heart is in the venture. She believes that I am about to marry her—"

Their noisy mirth interrupted him.

"And she believes that our marriage will unite China and Japan in a bond of tender love and devotion as everlasting as ours—hers and mine."

The others laughed so that Matzuyama gurgled, and Naghiki spilled his *saki*.

"The little painted imbecile believes that all she has told me, found out for me, all she has brought me, has been as much in her father's service as in mine. It was quicker so, and easier—to win her to our purpose, and to the service of Nippon."

At that word they rose reverently, and drained their cups, refilled to the brims, as if drinking a sacrament. Three times Osuro filled up the cups, three times the cups were drained gravely—before the Japanese sat down again—and Osuro filled the emptied cups once more, laughing coarsely as he did so.

"When will you tell her?" Matzuyama asked gleefully—smacking his lips at more than his shaking wine cup.

"In Tokio!"

"You risk too much," Naghiki urged presently. "When Yo finds that he has lost both Benevolent Crane and his daughter, he'll raise Shantung—enlist the white consulates and all that putrid missionary gang. All Christendom will come snarling about Nippon. You risk too much Osuro!"

"Yo will foam and gibber—but he will not squeal beyond his own gates," Osuro retorted. "Yo will hide his shame."

"And if you *are* mistaken?" Matzuyama took it up —"what if Yo will *not* sign?"

"Then we wreck Yo's mine. The fuse is ready—the battery is ready. Yo will sign or there will not be enough Benevolent rubbish to sweep into three buckets. And we'll give him a taste of our fuse—a tinkle of its music—just enough to scratch his nerves, convince him that the Benevolent Crane is at some enemy's mercy. I shall have that done at the ripe hour, before he learns that the girl is here—sees her waiting and weeping to be rescued."

"You are mad, Osuro," Matzuyama cried hotly. "To destroy even the poorest lode would put Yo on guard, and then it would be impossible to wreck the whole mine, if Yo does *not* press down his chop."

Osuro smiled coldly. "I have thought long and wisely, Matzuyama. I shall make no blunder. The mine is ours, and Yo's girl goes with me to Tokio."

"Is there nothing you fear? Are you sure that no one suspects?" Matzuyama still questioned. "The Chinese worms have outwitted us before this; they may again."

"I fear no worm of Shantung. In all Shantung I fear only one man—the long-faced English Rutherford."

"He is less than a sleeping rabbit—married to a buzzing dragon-fly," Naghiki said contemptuously.

"You describe his manner, Naghiki! You have not lived in England. I know them, almost as thoroughly as I dislike them—our arrogant English allies. And I fear them. Of them all, it is such as the Lord Rutherford who are most to be feared. When an educated, traveled Englishman is quiet, says nothing, seems to look at nothing, be interested in nothing but ball-games

and racing news, look out for him! He is dangerous. And they are fearless—almost as fearless as we Japanese are. When such Englishmen are Whitehall-trained and trusted—this man is—they are very dangerous. But I am having him well watched. He wants our mine—has made no secret that he does—which proves that there is something else that he wants greatly more. But he is not having me watched; he does not suspect me—or I should have been invited to his house, introduced to his wife. That is the Whitehall method."

"What about their friend who spends so much time at the Yo residence?" Matzuyama suggested. "What is *he* doing here?"

Osuro laughed with a stenched venom of contempt, with which only a Japanese can so completely soil laughter. "That yellow-haired nincompoop! Dawdling in a shady garden. Drinking Shantung wine out of jade bowls. Playing ping-pong when he feels energetic enough—not often—with old Madame Yo. Accompanying a girl's table-lute with an American jew's-harp. Doing nothing as hard as he can day in day out, joking about everything and about nothing. He is about as dangerous as a feather-stuffed pillow, about as dangerous as a yapping Chinese sleeve-dog. Yo," he added, "has two daughters—"

"You *may* understand Englishmen," Naghiki observed. "I have not shared your advantage of residence in England, Osuro. But I spent many years in the United States. You have not grasped American psychology quite exactly, O friend. I know them well, those happy-go-luckies, making always their joke; occasionally during my residence in the United States I have known them to my cost. When that sort of an American does

nothing and does it hard—take warning. He is about as harmless as petrol and burning pine shavings."

Osuro shrugged his shoulders indifferently.

All their speaking together had been in their own tongue, edging their international comments as no English could; a language of lilting beauty that can be turned to stinging, slimy hideousness.

Osuro's shrug of personal indifference, and national supremacy was as Japanese as all their words had been.

CHAPTER XXIV

TOM woke to a feeling of self-contempt the next morning—and cursed himself for a coxcomb; he had half a mind to make Hing kick him when Hing arrived with the early tea-pot, which Hing graphically called his "master's wake-up drink." He'd been all sorts of a fool the day before to think that there was any reason whatever for him to run away from Shantung. Yo Ya-ling and he were the best of good friends—that was all. She was no more in love with him than he was with her. The preposterous—and not at all nice—notion had never entered her proud little head. He'd been a low-down cad to think—well, not that it had—but that some day it might, if he didn't look out. That freak of a camel had jerked and tossed him until it had addled such small share of brains as he'd ever had. Ya-ling wouldn't look at him, any more than he would at her, except as a very good friend who was lots of fun too. He'd been a fool and a jackanapes and very much less than a gentleman to think for a moment—well, what he had thought for a moment, just because those queer

Chinese eyes of hers had looked like black-brown violets all misted with dew, when she sat playing Yankee Doodle. Of course, she gave it a Chinese lilt, with those cute little baby fingers of hers, on that cute little lute-thing that Walter Swift said was one of the best ever made, worth it's weight in moonlight-jade, and had belonged to—to—oh, some wonderful royal woman. Run away from Shantung! Not he—not till he was quite ready. Run away from Ya-ling, the best girl friend he'd ever had; insult her by doing that? Certainly not. Ya-ling could take care of herself; he could take care of himself. And their difference of race—white and yellow!—stood between them not only an absolute barrier but a perfect safeguard. There might be some risk in liking a white girl as much as he did Ya-ling, one he liked so much to be with, missed if he didn't see her for more than a day or two—a good deal of risk perhaps, if she was a girl he didn't wish to marry. But he could no more wish to marry this Chinese girl friend of his than he could have wished to marry Yo Ki, or that little mulatto girl who sold cigars in his office building, or a South Sea Islander. And Ya-ling could no more wish to marry him than he could her. They were safe to be the best chums in the world. And that settled it.

The tea-pot arrived, and with it the two American letters he had left unopened last night just where he'd found them.

"Good Lord, Hing, you are a persistent devil! Do you suppose I want to peruse correspondence at this hour of the morning?"

Hing bowed profoundly, and smiled sunnily. He was fond of this American master of his, as Chinese servants

are of all who pay the most nearly perfect service on earth with a little human kindness, and he did not consider Mr. Drew any crazier than most young white men that he'd ever observed.

"Oh well—have your way, as usual!" Tom slit the larger envelope, and drew out its silver-printed card, read it, and threw it up to the ceiling with a whoop of delight that would have startled Hing, if anything could have startled Hing.

Nettie Walker was going to be married—by George! Nettie was married! Who was Peter T. Brewster? Not a New Yorker. Why hadn't Molly told him it was coming off? He hoped Peter was one of the very best. What a blooming shame he hadn't heard in time to get a present over in time! He could have written Molly or cabled Tiffany. He'd send one now, of course he would, and "you can bet your life," he assured Hing, "that it will be a corker." But a girl liked to get her wedding presents beforehand, and stick them about at the reception, with Pinkerton men dressed like bluebloods—which some of them were—to keep an eye on them. Molly was a lazy tabby, and she'd get a section of his mind by the next post. He hoped Peter T. was half good enough for Nettie. "He'll have a devil of a time, if he isn't," he assured Hing—who was not interested in the statement, but beamed as if he were intensely, as he filled the cup and slipped the saucer invitingly near Mr. Drew's fingers.

"All right," the master murmured meekly, "I'll be forcibly fed—anything to placate you, oh most noble."

Hing proferred the buttered toast. "Who the devil is Peter T. Brewster, Hing?"

"Me not know," Hing confessed sadly, and drew a sock inside out, foot under leg.

"Well, let us hope that Nettie knows then; let's ask her. I've no doubt she thinks she does. You slit that mango open while I slit Miss Walker's envelope. By George though it isn't—it's Mrs. Peter T. Brewster's."

If Powers Drew could have been placed where Hing was as Tom read "William Walker's girl's" twelve-page letter, that astute New Yorker might have questioned the necessity of having sent his only son into Chinese exile. But an ounce of prevention often works more benefit than half the curatives in the pharmacopoeia. All sorts of things might have happened, that never would happen now, if Tom Drew had remained where his father best liked to have him—in New York City—and one or two things never could have happened that were going to happen to Tom and to several others—white and yellow.

Even Osuro, had he been in Hing's padded shoes, must have felt that there were times when the American idler of his last night's scorn, neither dawdled nor did nothing. Drew read Nettie's long letter very deliberately, but that was the last thing he did in a leisurely way for a number of hours. He dressed furiously, wrote a very long and expensive cable to Mrs. Peter T. Brewster care of her mother, and assured Hing that he'd break his Chink neck in several places, if that cable was not sent to K'üfu chop-chop.

"Can do," Hing promised blandly. Tom gulped his breakfast, but plenty of it, and then plunged enthusiastically into what he usually did with bitter reluctance —the writing of a very long and glowing letter. Much

as he loved his mother, he rarely wrote her particularly long letters. Oddly enough, it was his father to whom Tom wrote the most pages, and wrote most easily—and by no means only about business. No one had ever credited Powers Drew with magnetism. But few men who make, and do it unaided, great and permanent fortunes do not have considerable magnetism, whether their world ever suspects it or not. A great many people found themselves "telling things" to Powers Drew, and wondered afterwards how they had come to do it. And perhaps such friendship as the father had given his son is a magnetism in itself.

Tom wrote Nettie a longer letter than she had written to him, full of the good times they had had together, brimful of congratulations and warm, honest good wishes. He told her he was having a good time, liked his work, liked the Rutherfords more and more, thought Walter Swift a dear old chap. He wrote of the New York theaters, told her a story he'd heard of Tin Pan Alley—a perfectly nice story—wrote of gossip he'd gleaned and inferred from the New York papers, said he was sure she'd like Chicago—with a strong mental reservation as he wrote it that she would not stay there if she didn't—demanded his piece of wedding-cake, sent a tip-top (but not too tip-top) message to Peter T. Brewster, "in spite of his having carried away the most charming girl in all New York," and invited himself to visit them as soon as he got back home. But, except for the address at the top of the first page, he did not once mention China or any Chinese.

The letter signed, sealed and stamped, and Hing informed of what would happen both to him and his neck if it did not catch the first mail, Tom Drew lit a well-

earned pipe, and crunched himself up in the biggest arm-chair, to wrestle with the burning question of what his belated wedding present should be, and of where and how he'd get it. But the more he thought the less he could think. He wanted to send it at once. It must be a corker. But what? And there he stuck. He had given dozens of wedding presents, to dozens of girls. It was a perfectly easy thing to do in New York. Stroll down or up Fifth Avenue any day in the week—bar Sunday—and the puzzle was not what to give but what not to give. But here! Perhaps he'd better cable to Tiffany—or to Molly. But he didn't want to do that. He wanted to send Nettie something he had chosen for her himself. What? He knew! He'd ask Miss Yo to help him. She'd do it like a shot. And she had lived in England—wore a wrist watch sometimes that might have come from Tiffany's. And yet—no; he didn't believe that she and Nettie cared for the same things exactly, not even of the things that Western women wore. No—he wouldn't pester Ya-ling about it. . . . Of course! Lady Giggles. She'd fill the bill, if it could be filled this side of 'Frisco. That darned camel certainly had affected his head. He'd have to see a brain specialist, if this sort of thing went on long, though he didn't suppose there were any brain specialists in a place that didn't run to the right sort of wedding presents. He consulted Hing on the subject. And this time Hing did "savvy," and recommended an extraordinarily gifted lady, a Chinese lady, who seemed, from Hing's fervid description, to be a fairly even blend of a Zulu medicine-man and a Mongolian slight-of-hand and fortune-predicting juggler of bamboo slips.

Drew departed for K'üfu and the Rutherfords'

bungalow, and after a sweltering ride literally burst into Lady Rutherford's almost finished tiffin, and blurted out his errand and its immediate urgency very nearly without the usual formality of a greeting on his part, or a chance for one on theirs, for Rutherford too was at home, and Walter Swift and Yo Wing So were lunching with them.

They gave him squab and bringals and salad, and they soothed his impatience—or tried to—with all the impromptu advice they could think of on the spur of the moment.

"When in doubt play diamonds," Giggles' advice was first and briefest.

"She's swimming in them," Drew objected.

"A woman can't have too many diamonds, or ever think she has," Aline said.

"I've noticed that," her husband concurred—"not an American woman."

"I want to send her something special—something different from all the rest of the junk she's had sent her, and I want to get it off by the next boat."

Yo suggested a tortoise-shell saddle-horse. He knew of a particularly fine one, spotted like a leopard from mouth to tail and hoofs. And he had heard that American ladies rode in their beautiful parks. He also suggested a jeweled table-lute of ivory and jade. Lady Rutherford wondered why Drew flushed at that. Her husband and Swift supposed that Tom had gone red from the physical effort of not exploding at the picture of an American girl on the tortoise-shell Chinese horse. Yo offered, begged to be permitted, a screen that was one of the jewels of his collection—an offer that made Walter Swift flush in his turn. Swift had not seen it;

none of them had. It was kept, as the bulk of Yo's best house-furnishings always was, stored with care in a great room packed with all such things not in use; brought out for a day or two on occasions of great importance, and then put back in its bolted boxings of camphor-wood, and shrouded in many folds of Shantung's thick, undyed silk. The Chinese do not crowd themselves out of their rooms with a clutter of furniture. What they need of stools and tables—it is not much—they have in every-day use; but only one at a time are pictures or vases, ivories or screens of great beauty and cost placed in each room to focus the beauty-greedy eyes that never are allowed to grow "used" to, and then a little indifferent to, the gem before it is hidden away again. Yo described his screen as a poor thing unworthy of his exalted friend's condescending acceptance, called himself a worm and several more despicable things for presuming to crawl to the great lord Drew's noble feet with so contemptible an offering; but he mentioned the screen's maker by name, its date and a word of its history; and Walter Swift knew that Yo Wing So was trying to give away one of the richest, and most exquisite achievements of human art; a screen scarcely matched in China—not matched in any palace in Europe. Walter Swift would have knelt at Kwan Yin-ko's feet for the feast of an hour's sight of the storied screen, and he held his breath tremulously until Drew answered Yo Wing So.

Drew explained that Mrs. Brewster had a favorite mount, that she was not musical, did not exactly understand or value—stammered a little—said with restored composure that the screen Mr. Yo offered would scarcely go into any room of the best North Side apartment—and

stated clearly that not one of Yo's beautiful old treasures should leave Shantung through him.

"And Mr. Drew must buy what he gives himself," Aline Rutherford came to the rescue nicely, "spend his own money for it, or he could not in our country offer it to a bride."

Yo apologized.

Drew had not been surprised to find Yo Wing So at the Rutherford bungalow. Yo did not often go into the city, but when he did he rarely omitted to call upon Aline, a privilege he greatly prized. They had liked each other at once; and she had turned that to such profit for Giggles as she could, by being particularly charming to Yo Wing So. And the Chinese had responded heartily and gratefully. As little suspicious as an able Chinese who had lived through half a century of China's vicissitudes and Shantung's long years of torture could be, yet he had read Lady Rutherford as easily as if she had been an edict in Chinese characters, nailed against a *yamên* gate; he knew why Rutherford's wife made him so welcome, and never failed to accept any chance she was given to visit his ladies or to entertain them. It amused but did not repel him; it was a woman's duty to advance every interest and wish of her lord's, and Yo warmly approved of dutiful wives. But he also sensed that the foreign woman liked him, enjoyed their polyglot chats; and as for what she wished to gain and glean from him for her husband, Yo was quite willing to play into her hands, as far as it suited his own hand. It would have surprised Aline Rutherford to have known how much Yo Wing So enjoyed her—he enjoyed her hugely—and she would have been still more surprised to have known how much she amused him.

But he felt her charm, and probably he liked her the more cordially—and with a touch of paternal affection—because of a sparkling vibrant personality and a sweet vixenish wilfulness that closely resembled those of patrician Chinese women. Rutherford knew shrewdly enough what Yo Wing So thought of Aline—and why. But the Englishman held his tongue about *that*. Aline would have had a good deal to say, if he had told her that there was a good deal of the Chinese woman in her; Aline had enough to say—her speech needed no spurring. And in this she certainly was not un-Chinese. Hers is a talkative sex—nearly everywhere. But there are only two races the majority of whose women talk all the time: the American and the Chinese.

English and Chinese men have several identical strong characteristics; they both, at their best, have mental and moral affinities—affinities of character. The English and Chinese women have few, and farther to seek. The Englishman may yet go far in China, the American man may not. There is a good deal Confucian, if nothing of Lao Tsu, in many typically English Englishmen. There is little of either in American men.

The Chinese man will go far—everywhere—when he bends himself to the task.

On the other hand—and it is unaccountable to rash and haphazard casual analysis (which scarcely *is* analysis)—there is no little instinctive sympathy between the American woman and the Chinese woman—intensely interesting to trace and to ferret out, if one could, but not to be told in one page or in many. But the fact *is*.

If ever East and West frankly and firmly meet, it will be in the clasp of Chinese and English hands—men's hands. If ever the chasm between West and East is

bridged, it is not improbable (little as we think it now) that American women will be the bridge builders, and American women who will be able to cross and recross it most safely. It will be a frail bridge at first; it may be made stronger very gradually, or it may crash and go. No consortium will build that bridge or make it secure. Every political, self-seeking gasbag, white or yellow, will imperil it—and worse. Only human sympathy and fair-play can cement and make it weather-proof. Storm-proof it scarcely ever can be. But then, it may never be built at all!

White and yellow marriage is more an abomination than a civilized experiment. May all the gods of the East, the common sense of the West, and the taste of both debar and brand it!

Chinese women never will grow at home in the Occident. American women may in China—one type of American women, a fine, high type. The Chinese woman does not transplant; the educated, "quick" American woman does; transplantation enriches and sweetens her.

Yo urged his own women to visit Aline, commanded them to receive her cordially whenever she came to see them. And they obeyed him, of course—all but the old mother who obeyed no one. Madame Yo did not visit Lady Rutherford—but she did not frown on Lady Rutherford visiting them, or veto Yo's wish that his wife and daughters should return those visits whenever they liked. Yo Su did not like at all, but she went to the bungalow often enough to show a decent pretense of doing as her father had asked. Mrs. Yo neither particularly cared to go, nor minded going—when it was not too much trouble, or too hot or too cold. Ya-ling was

glad to go fairly often. She had not liked England; she had felt its cold and sunless months too intensely, had been too homesick, and had thought English people both dull and offensively assertive when they were not more offensively uninterested. But she soon came to share her father's liking of the fair-haired Anglo-American. And she often met at the bungalow friends of the Rutherfords whom she liked to meet. Yo Ya-ling realized what Su and the grandmother never would, or Mrs. Yo to any extent, that old walls were broken down, at least for a time, and that Chinese life was a cosmopolitan adventure now, an adventure in which Chinese women, scarcely less than Chinese men, must bear a share—hold up and buttress China's end. She could not dislike Lord Rutherford. His grave, quiet courtesy compelled her Chinese liking. But it was his wife and Mr. Swift towards whom she soon felt something very like friendship. She found that she liked all Americans, which showed perhaps some feminine cocksureness; for of the many millions who claim American citizenship Yo Ya-ling knew only three units—Drew, Swift and Lady Rutherford. Companionship had strengthened her swift instinctive liking that she had given Drew at once because of what he had done for Ki, and the intimacy that she believed had been theirs. And the Chinese girl was frankly, if daintily, fond of Walter Swift; his sincere interest in her people, his not superficial knowledge of Chinese arts and Chinese literature won her, his polish of manner as well as mind caught her respect—and they both were aristocrats; Swift more altogether a sash-wearer than even the English peer. Walter Swift had never ridden to hounds, or bled profusedly from the impact of cricket balls, never had

skinnned his nose and shins at the Wall Game, or bellowed his lungs like a demented bull's at either Lords or Mortlake. Fine breeding has its varieties—very many. Walter Swift's appealed to Yo Ya-ling more than any other—not Chinese—of good-breeding's many varieties of expression could have done. And the almost cameo-beauty of his face and hands always lured and contented her Chinese eyes. Steeped in beauty for so many centuries Yo Ya-ling expected men of her own caste to be beautiful, simply as a social obligation and, too, as a loyalty to birthright. Lord Rutherford was not beautiful and Ya-ling certainly did not think him so.

Yo Wing So wore European clothes when he visited Lady Rutherford, he wore them with considerable "air"; a frock-coat rather too tight, trousers altogether too skirt-like and *bouffant*. He uncovered, in courtesy to the Western convention he very much disapproved, but nothing could prevail upon him to part with his hat—a very beautiful (and ugly) "stove-pipe" about three sizes too small for Yo's splendid head. It sat on his lap now, which kept Yo Wing So at an awkward distance from the table. But he bent across his gleaming headgear imperturbably and Lady Rutherford's spotless damask proved how exquisitely his fine yellow hands had balanced and directed heavy, Western silver, tomato soup, fish mayonnaise and stewed pigeon. It really was a very elegant, if by no means graceful, social and manual achievement. Chopsticks are not always quiet or quietly used, and even in the best Chinese families a good deal drips back into the bowl held cautiously close to the eater's mouth, but a Chinese gentleman does not spill food on an English hostess' tablecloth.

Rutherford shepherded Swift and Yo into his own room when coffee was done with, and Drew followed Aline to the coolest corner of the shaded verandah. The three older men had business to discuss over their tobacco, not for the first time recently.

"You are absurd not to send her something Chinese —of course, something very nice," Lady Rutherford said as Drew held a match to her cigarette. "You'll get nothing else worth sending here; so it's that or Tiffany, Tom."

Drew shook his head. "I will only send Nettie the best, and I will not be one of the vandals who take Chinese treasure out of China."

"That's nonsense. China must sell and trade, if she is to live."

"Tea and rice, tussore silk and her second-rate boxes and tea-pots, perhaps, though I believe that what would prosper China most even now, would be to have us clear out lock, stock and barrel, every man jack of us who is not a Chinese, and leave her alone, but she has no need to sell her heirlooms, bits of her soul, and no right to, and we are cads when we lead her to."

Aline Rutherford smiled cryptically. "Oh, then something Japanese, and extraordinarily nice."

"Imitation Chinese!" Tom retorted with large contempt. "I want something *real*. Nettie is real, if a girl ever was. And I will not add to any Jap's bank account—not one ten-cent piece."

"Drat the girl," Lady Rutherford said to herself. "My word, Tom," she said aloud, "a lot of oil you'll pour on the troubled international waters. Make it Tiffany then, and quit fussing over it. Now, I want to book you for a picnic week or two; I *have* booked you,

rather. Giggles has rented most of a perfectly dicky old monastery up on the hills, where it's worlds cooler than this. We are sending Tompkins up there next week with cart-loads and camel-loads and coolie-loads of everything to make us comfy—and week after next, when Tomp has got it all ship-shape, we are going—we and you and Walter and two or three homesick Englishers from Tsi-nan—and we are going to have a downright good-time in that old Chink monastery—almost forget that we are in China; have an English house-party, don't you know, with a few Yankee high-jinks thrown in."

"I'm awfully sorry, Mrs. Giggles, but I *am* booked for another sort of house-party that same week."

"Break it."

"I couldn't."

"Couldn't, or don't want to?"

"Both," Drew told her.

Lady Rutherford eyed her cigarette gravely. "What sort of house-party? Where?"

"On a lake, in a houseboat."

"Yo's houseboat!"

Drew nodded.

"Oh, I see," was all the woman said—then. But late at night she said considerably more to Rutherford, and said it more tartly than Aline Rutherford often spoke when she and her husband were alone. She was a little angry—perhaps a trifle hurt—and very anxious.

CHAPTER XXV

IT must not be understood that all Drew's time was spent at Tsi-nan Fu and K'üfu, or in the countryside about and between them. His father's business, and the investigations Powers Drew had more especially charged him to make, sent him rather far afield in China more than once, and sometimes, bent on pleasure or on business or both, he spent a week or more at the European settlement of Port Edward at Weihaiwei, and on the island of Liukung with its English homes and pastimes. But he always came back to the chummery. The firm's business in that part of Shantung was almost in embryo—and Tom had not secured a Cherry Beauty yet. Perhaps he had seen a dozen or more, and each that he'd seen he'd chased and stalked with all his experienced skill, and with the indomitable patience of a deep-rooted obsession; but he never had caught one yet. He intended to, at all cost, before he turned back home. Nor had Madame Yo had a Cherry Imperial caught for him. It was his collector's fancy to secure the rare bit of red gauze himself, by his own net and skill; and he had begged Ya-ling to tell no one of his quest and desire. Miss Yo, of course, had respected his wish. He should get the butterfly for himself—if he could.

There were Brinsmead pianos and tennis at Liukung; but there were fewer butterflies in British Shantung than in the K'üfu countryside, and the Cherry Imperial had never been heard of where England's flag flew. And somehow at Weihaiwei he always missed Yo's old garden, and caught himself wondering how the venerable and caustic Lady Yo was. He missed the Yos, and he

missed their garden. He wondered once or twice, with a smile, if he'd miss them in New York. Tom had as little wish to settle down in China in the way that Walter Swift had done, as Powers Drew intended that his only son should.

Tom had chafed a bit at the tone of Lady Rutherford-Carmichael's "Oh—I see," when he had told her that he was going to spend a week on Yo's houseboat; he had understood Aline's tone perfectly; but privately he had agreed with her rather. He had given the Yos his promise a little impulsively—but given, his word must be kept. Mrs. Yo had spoken the invitation, but whether at the command of husband or mother-in-law Drew never knew. It did not occur to him that Mrs. Yo had thought of it herself, or that it was any special wish of her own or of her daughters'; he and Yo Su were better friends now than had seemed possible at first; but Su still showed considerable aloof indifference. And that it was no wish of Ya-ling's he felt sure from her having said to him that she feared a week or more on their very Chinese houseboat would bore him. And he rather feared it would. But he had promised to go; and he was going. It was silly and cattish of Aline Rutherford to have read into it something that had not an iota of truth. Women were like that, but he'd thought Aline a cut above it.

He had questioned Hing discreetly as to what life on a rich Chinese's houseboat was like. And the information Hing had given him was startling. And Swift had confirmed Hing. The houseboat would be a very elegant houseboat; beautifully carved and gilded—lots of servants, mountains to eat, oceans to drink, hundreds of cushions, music, lanterns, not one moment or one half

inch of privacy. Every one slept in their clothes and they *all* slept in one room. The houseboat had only one room: one room and one deck, plenty of cushions and hard little stools, low tables to eat from, gorgeous food, sweet, yellow wine, tinkly music, moonlight, bamboos on the bank, ripples on the water, sunshine. The boat wouldn't move, just stay stock still on the lake. There'd be lanterns—lots of lanterns, but just one huge carved and gilded room, just one great lacquered deck, not another nook or crevice; wash your faces—all of you—in one great bamboo basin, warm perfumed water for the family and their guest, luke-warm leavings for the servants and boatmen. The boat house-boy would wash your hands, and dry them and your face on one general towel, do your hair and ears and nails. Go ashore ever? No. Tom Drew not only mentioned Jerusalem; he also mentioned Christopher Columbus. Hing's enthusiastic "all one same piecee velly dam nice" did not convince the American, but Hing's vivid description, confirmed by Walter Swift, did. And Swift always saw everything Chinese through particularly rosy spectacles, and described everything Chinese as radiantly as he saw it.

But he'd said he'd go. He was going.

Tom never had anticipated a holiday less pleasantly, not even the Christmas that he spent in boarding-school with two other boys and mumps.

He never enjoyed a holiday more.

In the first place, he not only had a towel and basin for his personal and sole toilet purposes, but he had a tiny and very comfortable sleeping-boat of his very own, with a shake-down on its deck for Hing, a subsidiary luxury for which Hing was piteously ungrateful. Hing would have liked far better to have slept and smoked his

night-pipe with Yo's servants on the "top-side" of the other boat.

Drew spent his sleeping hours alone, attended only by his own servant. He did not have to sleep in "all his clothes" as both Aline and Walter Swift had predicted. The accustomed relaxation of soft and silky pyjamas was not forbidden nor in any way an embarrassment. His slumber hours and his hours of toilet were his own. For the rest he did as he liked; stayed in his own floating snuggery or went to the more leviathan houseboat where Mr. and Mrs. Yo, Yo Su and, Tom supposed at first, K'ung too, ate, lived and slept. For neither Yo Z'in Tö, nor Yo Ya-ling had left the Shantung homestead. The grandmother had refused to come beyond her own walls. And, at the last moment, to Su's dismay, and to every one's surprise, the old autocrat had commanded that not her favorite granddaughter, but the elder sister should stay with her in attendance and companionship. Yo Su was miserable and strangely agitated at the grandmother's decision, Yo Ya-ling both rejoiced and regretted. But it occurred to neither to question or demur. From a decision of their easy-going father, or from one of their always complacent mother, either Su or Ya-ling under extraordinary provocation, might have whispered a prayerful, hesitant suggestion of modification; from no decision of Yo Z'in Tö's was there any appeal, or any living Yo disobedient enough, or bold enough, to attempt or hint one.

Had Tom suspected that there was any possibility that Ya-ling might not be of the houseboat party, he would not have promised to be of it. And when he realized that she was not there he was ruefully dismayed. What the dickens was he to do there all alone without Ya-ling

to talk to? He was fond of them all; they were fond of him; but he didn't know them except through a glass darkly—a particularly thick glass very darkly. And they, he was sure, knew and understood him less than he did them. He knew Miss Yo, and she knew him. What the devil was he to do shut up in a brace of Chinese houseboats with two Chinese men—Yo and K'ung Kuo-fan whom he barely knew, and two Chinese women, one of whom spoke no English, and the other who would not unless she was forced to. What was he to do there without Yo Ya-ling? He was downright disgusted, and for less than ten cents he'd have told them so, if only it were not impossible openly to blaspheme at overflowing kindness and hospitality.

But our greatest enjoyments sometimes come to us in disguise, often take us entirely by surprise. Almost at once he was enormously glad he had come—would not have missed this for anything. And he wrote and told his father so in terms so glowing, so unusual, if not even without precedent in the letter of an American man to his father, that the letter when it reached Powers Drew gave him the most uncomfortable hour of his much varied life.

As it happened, Tom Drew had not written home much about the elder Miss Yo. His letters from the chummery had dwelt more on Yo Wing So, and on the Benevolent Crane than they had on the Yo ladies. But during the few days that he was on the lake-moored houseboat he "cut business out" both of his own mind and of the one letter he wrote. He felt that he never had written home as he ought to have done about China —Chinese China untouched by the welter of other nationals that schemed and snarled at her crumbling

barriers and in her treaty ports. He'd do it now, or have one good try to. Here—alone with his very Chinese friends, not a white face or voice for leagues, not so much as an English book in his suitcase—he ought to be able to send his father some sort of a picture of what the country and its natives really were like—if it was in him to do it at all. He'd have a shot. He had won a prize for a composition at school once; the composition, "Washington, Hero and Gentleman," was treasured in the family archives still, he knew; and it hadn't been so bad either. Yes, he'd have a shot.

He did. And he hit a bull's-eye, if ever marksman did; hit Powers Drew in his weakest, most sensitive place, riddled that "hard" New Yorker, as neither business variations, nor the thought of "Walker's girl" as a possible daughter-in-law ever had. When Tom Drew's father had read that letter once his face was damp and clammy with sweat, and his strong hands shook; when he had reread it, more carefully than he ever in all his long careful life had done anything before, Powers T. Drew seriously canvassed the possibility of reaching China by aeroplane.

Tom spread himself on a description of Yo Su, and he enclosed a particularly happy snapshot—full-length, trousers and all—of Su with N'zö-ping sitting on her shoulder. Tom's description turned Powers Drew purple; Tom's "snap" almost made Tom's father an apoplectic.

Tom secretly thought Yo Su a somewhat faulty little girl, but they all had been too downright kind to him for him to breathe across the Pacific and two wide belts of continent any censorious word of any Yo. And partly that was Powers Drew's own fault; the only spanking

he ever had given his son Tom had won by an over-frank criticism of the personal appearance and the manners of a girl of years tenderer than his own at dancing school. Tom had been strictly brought up to speak well of every woman, or to hold his tongue.

He described the houseboat and its *menus*, the sacred mountain at whose foot it was laked, the tropic beauty of this part of China, as explicitly as he could, and then he 'let himself go' on the girl who was, and he said so frankly, ten times prettier than any girl he ever had seen before, the loveliest girl who ever had lived, he believed; he wished he could bring her home with him for them all to see. She'd make little New York sit up and look, he assured his father, and "Su" was as good and sweet as she was lovely, as cute as a kitten, as gay and bright as a lark at sunrise.

If Tom had gone on and confided across the ocean how interested he was in a Chinese named K'ung Kuo-fan, also on the houseboat and evidently deeply enamoured of Miss Su Yo, and how little doubt he had that it was going to be a match, it would have saved one of the best fathers a man ever had days of grilling worry, nights of sleeplessness and many gray hairs. But that was what the Drew in China omitted to do—he was a bit "full up" of letter writing by the time he had done all the vivid justice he could to houseboat, sacred Mountain, local scenery and Yo Su; he had exhausted his epistolary eloquence—and broke off rather abruptly with "Love to Mother—and Molly" and his usual "Your affectionate Tom."

It had been the elder Drew's undeviating habit to carry his worries alone. Business anxieties the son had had to know of now and then, and because he knew of

them share somewhat—now and then; that was a necessary part of the son's business training. But business anxieties had been more stimulant than worry to Powers Drew always—a born and ardent fighter who also never steered nearer the financial wind than was moderately prudent, never risked more sprats than he could afford to lose in his fishing for a catch of golden mackerel. And he had trained as well as bred his only son to carry business vicissitudes lightly though firmly, as he himself did. Powers Drew had never let his wife catch any glimmer of any business anxiety. And until "Walker's girl" had troubled and fretted him, Powers Drew scarcely had been touched by an intimate anxiety since the day he had married the girl he wished to marry.

The great wild geese of China are the monogomists of the Asian skies. If widowed, even after but the honeymoon, neither a gander nor a goose ever mates again, and sometimes lives in feathered celibate loneliness for ninety years or longer—for the wild geese of China often see the century round. A Chinese fowler is reluctant to kill a wild goose or gander unless able to kill also its mate. Powers Drew would have admired the great wild geese of China. Almost never had a Drew married a second time, and Powers could recall none who had changed his mind (or hers) as to whom *he* would marry if he married at all. His own grandfather had lived a widower for more than half a century, and had brought up a sturdy family of six—one a baby in its cradle when the wife and mother died—with no more feminine assistance than that of "hired girls," and not too much of that. Elmer Drew, rich, traveled, companionable, lived still in the house on Beacon Street his young wife had died in thirty years ago, and no second

wife shared it with him or ever would. Asa, another cousin of Powers Drew's, was still unmarried at seventy-three, because a blue-eyed Prudence Clark had died on Cape Cod when she was sixteen. An uncle of Powers Drew's, whose tombstone credited him with ninety-eight useful and God-fearing years, never had married because a girl in Rhode Island he'd fallen in love with at their first school, and had proposed to on his twenty-first birthday, had refused to be his wife. And Powers Drew, although he did not "rub it in" with her herself, knew beyond all manner of doubt that he never should have married at all if he had not married Alice Brown.

He believed that Tom was a true chip of the family block. There would be but one girl that the boy definitely would make up his mind he desired to marry, and if for any reason he did not marry that one girl, Tom's father believed that Tom never would marry at all. That was one of the last things that Powers Drew wished to happen. He believed in the Drew blood; he wished it to persist. He wished to see Tom's children, and to have a hand in molding their futures. He had hoped that Tom would find the right wife and marry her when Tom was somewhere about thirty. Nettie Walker had been the wrong possibility. A Chinese girl—small wonder that Powers Drew felt sick with worry. He doubted if Tom would marry a Chinese. He knew that Tom would offer no slighter thing to a girl whose parents had been more than kind to him, made him free of their home. But if Tom loved this Chinese girl that he raved about in that letter there, it was at least an even chance that Tom would never marry at all.

Powers Drew swallowed an oath in an aching throat, and wished he had had sense enough to go along to China with Tom. He'd rather Tom had married Nettie than a Chinese girl, and he was not sure that he would not even have preferred Tom to have married Nettie than never marry at all.

Well, all he could do now was to cable Tom to come home at once. He drew the cable forms toward him, and the message would have been started in another two minutes—had not Mrs. Drew pushed open her husband's "Private" office door.

"What's up, Papa?" she demanded suspiciously when her husband wrote without a tremor, and handed her without comment, almost listlessly, the preposterous cheque she had demanded.

And Powers broke his rule of keeping every trouble he possibly could from Alice; handed her Tom's letter, and watched her face while she read it.

"Well," she said, as he laid it down, and leaned back still more comfortably in the big office chair. "What has upset you, Papa? What are you afraid of?"

The husband told her.

"Powers Drew!" the wife was angry. "*My* son! You ought to be ashamed of yourself. I can tell you I am ashamed of you. Our Tom! It's a foolish letter, I grant you that—and I think Tom's just making fun. What's he doing off on a Chinese houseboat, just with Chinamen and women! What did you send him to China for anyway! You bring him home again—he's been there long enough. Send some one else off there, if you need to; but bring our boy home!" Mrs. Drew took another look at Yo Su's photograph, before she

tore it across and threw it into Powers' big wastepaper basket.

"I was writing the cable when you came in"—her husband told her.

"Don't do that, Papa," his wife counseled. "There's nothing in your notion—and it's an insult to Tom and to us, your thinking it at all. But don't you go and put the idea in *his* head. Get it out of yours instead. You trust our son not to do a thing like that. And, if he does, you trust me to kill that Chinese girl. I rather think I'd kill Tom too! But he won't—or anything of that sort. You write Tom just a usual sort of letter. Say you are glad he is having a nice time. Tell him to come home as soon as he feels like it. Say you've made up your mind to let China more or less slide for a time; and that you feel you need him here. Tell him you don't feel any too well some days—but he's not to let on a word of that to me—and you feel you'd like him nearer. Don't overdo it. Whatever you do, don't lay it on too thick. And I'll write—on Sunday as usual—and tell him as a secret that I don't think you are up to the mark. He'll come home! If he doesn't, you go to bed, and I'll cable. But we'll not need to cable; and it's better not, unless we have to."

"Perhaps you're right, Momma." The man spoke hesitantly.

"Of course I am. And you are not to fret yourself any more about it. There's nothing in it." Alice Drew folded her cheque and opened her purse; she was going.

"That enough? All you want, Mother?" Powers pointed a lean forefinger at the pinkish slip his wife was folding.

"No," she said with a gentle laugh, "it will do—for to-day. Why Father," she bent over him as he sat at his desk, and laid a plump, exquisitely gloved hand on his hair, "it would be stealing candy from a baby to take more than that from you to-day."

Powers Drew took the gloved hand in one of his, and stood up, putting an arm about his wife's shoulders. "Mother, do you remember just how much we had in all the world, to face the world with, when we were married, you and me?"

Mrs. Drew nodded. "Not a fourth part of what they'll give me for this when I get to the bank."

"Do you remember how we felt when we had saved our first thousand?"

"I'm not likely to forget that day, Father."

"Nor me. Well, we've earned our pile, Allie, and mostly it's been good fun doing it."

"Go along, Powers! A lot of the earning I've done!"

"The biggest part, Wife: for you have been the driving power that's made me do it, and made me want to. I'd be selling canned peaches and molasses in Grover's grocery store at three dollars a week, I reckon, this minute, if you hadn't said 'Yes' that night in the buggy. You've earned every dollar that I have. Now you go off and spend a bit of it. There's more where it came from, don't you forget that, Mother. We can't take it with us. We can afford to spend a goodish lot now. But," he added, grimly, as he went with her to his door, "there is just one thing we can't afford, Allie; we can't afford to have anything go wrong with the children. It would finish me, Momma, if Tom took a wrong turn."

"Tom won't," Mrs. Drew said stoutly. "He never has yet; and he never will."

Powers Drew felt better. He had great faith in that wife of his. And he rang briskly for his stenographer, and dictated business letters ably for an hour.

But during the next few months more than one man on Wall Street said to some other, "Say, how white Powers Drew is going all of sudden."

Several things united to make Tom's short stay on the Chinese houseboat so unexpectedly enjoyable.

In the first place no one fussed him. Yo Ya-ling had found a way to convince her father that the elaboration of speech and of little social ceremonies which were the merest Chinese politeness embarrassed Mr. Drew; that the most welcome kindness they could give him was to let him come and go and be with them in the simplest way. Once convinced of that—preposterous and crass as it seemed to him—Yo Wing So made a great effort to conform to his honored guest's wish to be treated with what seemed to courtly Mr. Yo positive rudeness. What a guest wished—liked best—that a host must give and do. The Imperial Hymn of Welcome no longer burst and swirled out at Tom Drew when he strolled into Yo's garden or Yo's women's courtyard. The concubines no longer on their knees proffered him porcelain boxes of toasted locust's larvæ, lacquer bowls of venerable and redolent eggs mixed with candied quince and dwarf red-peppers, and with painted flagons of yellow wine. Madame Yo still claimed him, and occasionally proclaimed him the goldenest fruit of her unworthy womb, the most fragrant flower fed of her young milk;

but she did it less often, and less shrilly. Yo Z'in Tö had aged noticeably since Drew had come to China. Tom, tender to her years, had grown very used to the old woman, and fond of her too. She was such a tiny whisk of feminine old age, so loving and so terribly fiery, and the years left to her now could be but few. Her imperious, dauntless metal appealed to his American metal. And he found the joke of her irresistible; a tiny, not much more than knee-high, very loving, very shrewish old woman, wrapped in shabby old clothes, a veritable fortune flashing on her little yellows claws of hands; so frail that a sturdy boy of ten could have snapped her in two, holding a great and puissant family and all its servitors always in awe, often in white-lipped terror, struck Tom Drew as the biggest joke he'd ever heard. Except Madame Yo, none of them treated him with fantastic ceremony now. Yo found it hard to address impolitely one he respected deeply, but he did his best, and only about every other time he spoke to Tom, stated that he was Tom's putrid worm, that he—Yo—was the Great Man's baby, that it was unpardonable of him to pollute with his leprous breath the fragrant garden of Drew's heaven-sent presence.

On the houseboat Tom was treated with the least ceremony that a Chinese family of sash-wearers could contrive to employ.

Both the place in which the boat floated, and the houseboat life were utterly unlike all that the New York man had ever known—or suspected. The quiet was scarcely rippled. They themselves might have been Earth's only habitants for all they saw or heard of others. And the man who never had been exactly quiet before, found peculiar refreshment in this life and place

of silence. It would have palled before long, of course. But Tom's stay on the houseboat was brief—less than a week. And his months—more than a year of them now—in China had wearied him more than he'd suspected of ceaseless firecrackers, tight-packed welters of alien humans, business strain that had been all the greater for the very indefiniteness of what his father had sent him to do. Also, there had been since he'd left Tsi-nan Fu a good deal of intimate personal experience seething in Tom's unsuspecting head. The houseboat that never moved on the motionless lake, quiet kindly people who spoke softly and moved slowly on noiseless padded feet, the tender tinkle of a table-lute, and not often it, or the whisper of wind in the bamboos at the lake side, the nearest "noise" he ever heard, pillowed and cradled life and nerves. It was human life in suspension—at perfect peace.

There were no firecrackers on Yo's houseboat—or, if there were, none was fired. It was a dream-life in a dream-place—not in Shantung, but in Hunan—where in the Manchu days Yo Wing So had had his official *yamên*, where he still had many interests and rich holdings, and where he liked to keep holiday, when his leisure served, looking up at sacred Nan Yüeh.

The boats—the leviathan-like houseboat which was headquarters for them all, and the little fleet of junk-shaped boats about it—so small and pretty that they reminded Drew of the junks carved from smooth, hard nut shells that Chinese shops in New York and San Francisco have sold for nearly a century now, were a fairy-show at night. Perhaps a thousand lanterns were hung and lit every night on the edges of Yo's home of boats, each lantern as beautiful as it was odd, each different

from all the others, an inexhaustible differing which scarcely any but Chinese ingenuity could have achieved. Some were tomato-shaped, some shaped like melons, others like fish, others shaped and line-creased like footballs; but no two were alike; each was beautifully decorated; their soft reflections in the motionless water made the quiet lake about the boats a burning opal, mysterious, indescribably beautiful, Chinese! Tens of thousands of fire-flies (the lamps-of-mercy that Kwan Yin-ko sends from Heaven to show Chinese wanderers their way on the perilous mountain paths) glittered and darted among the bamboos on the shore, and Yo Su in a robe of rose, sat on a padded quilt of blue-shot green, and at her father's command picked from her ivory table-lute an old Chinese love-tune; and K'ung Kuo-fan's amber face was a living flame. And when at Yo Wing So's command Su played it again and sang its words as she picked her lute's silver strings, K'ung Kuo-fan turned his face away. And—Drew was sure—K'ung's hands gripped his arms hard under his coat's satin sleeves—for Kuo-fan was finely clad on the houseboat of Yo Su's father.

Drew wondered if Su was thinking of Kuo-fan, or caring what Kuo-fan thought of her, as she sang the old love-tune to her lute—at the lord father's command. Tom thought not. The moon was up, the deck-lamps were lit, Su sat in a circle of clear light; and Drew watching her little brooding face thought that her thoughts were far away—back in Shantung perhaps. He wondered how it was with Yo Su; but he had no clue to that delicate riddle and nothing the Chinese girl did or said even hinted a clue. But Tom knew how it was with grave, courtly K'ung Kuo-fan. A blind day-bat might have seen that, at the gold hour of full noon—

the hour of "day-star-up-top-side-sky-all-wide-spread-out."

Tom hoped to goodness the fellow would get her! He had formed a high opinion of K'ung Kuo-fan. And Tom's letter already had started for New York. Boatmen had poled it ashore, and a runner started through the bamboos with it two days ago—the well-meant, filial letter that was to twist and grill and age Powers Drew as no Wall Street panic ever had, or ever could,—and disturb Alice Drew rather more than she would have had her husband know for worlds.

In K'üfu, at the Yos', K'ung had held himself aloof from the American, but here he had shown himself frankly friendly—a loyal falling in with Yo Wing So's unmistakable attitude, perhaps, at first; but, after an awkward start or two—on both their parts—toward better acquaintance, Drew and K'ung had found that they liked each other, enjoyed talking together. Which of the two the discovery surprised the more is one of the many such questions that have no answer. But something like friendship came to the American and the Chinese. K'ung's English was more fluent and sounder than the American's Chinese. But they made shift with both—and they talked together for hours, smoking on Tom's deck or in K'ung's cabin when all in the big houseboat were asleep on their mats—all but the night watchman on guard who played dominoes without a sound or a word till day and the sleepers awoke.

It is not easy for a Western man—least easy for an American man—to recognize manliness that is clad in petticoats and flowered silks; it is not easy for an Eastern man who has not "advanced" from his people's old ways to credit with true manliness and masculinity a

man who parades in trousers the modesty more appropriate to women, and leaves to his wives and sisters the more immodest garments of skirts and the enormity of "top-pieces" molded like lacquer to the flesh-shape of maidens and matrons, and—even more indecent—cut away from soft throats. But character and sterling worth can hew and hack their message through most things.

To their enormous common surprise Tom Drew and K'ung Kuo-fan found each other—alone on the lake at the foot of the most beautiful of China's five sacred mountains.

Tom Drew liked China better than K'ung Kuo-fan liked the West, and knew much less of China and the Chinese than K'ung knew of several parts and peoples of Europe. K'ung had spent four years at Oxford, and had traveled slowly over the Continent. He had observed studiously though not without prejudice. Of all he had seen he had liked very little. K'ung had not been in America; but, as far as it was in him to like any Western race, he was disposed to think well of Americans, if only in gratitude. For K'ung Kuo-fan was too young to remember with the sting of unforgettable personal knowledge that when the nineteenth century was young the streets of San Francisco had run red with innocent Chinese blood; and he knew that the United States—the only "First Power" white race of which it is true—never had seized upon a Chinese acre. For the United States Concession at Shanghai is mutual convenience rather than arbitrary or selfish encroachment.

They talked of many things as they sat and smoked in the star-light. And it was from what K'ung said, gravely and slowly, that the New Yorker sent to China

to "learn China" gathered his first serious impressions of China—her past, the tangle of her present, the quicksands of her world-future. It was then that it occurred to Drew that after he went home he'd hold such watching-brief as he could for this old, old country that this Chinese loved so profoundly and in such dignity and pride. In his own small way—and the way of enormous wealth and influence never need be altogether small—he would stand China's friend, if he could, or, if that were beyond his power and sphere, would never be her foe.

They talked of many things but never once of any woman. But as they talked and smoked Drew thought persistently of two—of Su and of Ya-ling, and he believed that K'ung Kuo-fan's thought never strayed far from Yo Su.

A man in love—at least in the Occident—often is a thing of mirth to his onlooking friends. The way of a Western man with a maid, or even a youthful and attractive widow, sometimes lays a sheeplike look on his face. "In love" may look a silly enough performance in Europe, or even in Chicago or Bangor, Maine—if you who look are not one of the in-loves. In China it is not so—partly (not wholly) because privacy sanctifies love-making and marriage precedes it. That K'ung Kuo-fan was in love, very much in love, with Yo Wing So's butterfly-pretty, sweet-pea dainty younger daughter was as visible as the day-star when noon was cloudless. But he wore his fond infatuation proudly and with a quiet dignity that the American thought peculiarly manly and charming.

When he next sat out on the stairs with a girl at a dance in New York, and she found him not only newly

deferential, but a trifle "stiff," Tom Drew's partner probably would not realize that she owed both those changes in him to a Chinese named K'ung Kuo-fan and to the way he had borne himself on the deck of a Chinese houseboat in the presence of a Chinese girl who rarely threw him a look, and never, except in reply, gave him a word.

Perhaps what most and soonest drew K'ung and Drew toward each other was the Chinese man's fairness—the last quality the American had expected to discover in any Oriental mentality, and last of all in any Chinese. K'ung Kuo-fan seemed to have looked at the present condition of China, and at the scarifying problem of her future, from every other national angle as well as from China's own—looking always through grave Chinese eyes, weighing always with a mind that centuries of culture had made an instrument of exquisite balance. He saw how indiscretions and blunders on both sides had led to much of China's apparent "undoing"; he saw, and admitted, something at least to be spoken in mitigation, if not even urged for their claims and desires, of each of the anxious hungered peoples that yapped and strained towards the fatness of China. He made no secret of his dislike of the Nipponese, made no apology for his dislikes of those "dwarfs," of giant and unneighborly ambition; but he added voluntarily that Japan was in a tight fix—had been for decades, and that the keen intelligence of her statesmen could not fail to foresee a tighter fix threatening Japan's years to come, generations unborn. There *was* a Japanese side to it all, he stated—even to the sore Shantung Question.

Tom Drew liked K'ung Kuo-fan enormously. K'ung was a splendid fellow.

CHAPTER XXVI

K'ÜFU often is called the Mecca of China, as it is, but it is so much more, and it is so vitally the Spiritual Core of China that our use of the term is almost an insolence.

K'üfu stands alone in all human history, a sanctuary apart and above all the other monuments and seals of human thought and achievement, and of the greatest, most significant, unforced and deeply ethical civilization of recorded time: civilization built on the bed-rock of a great, enormous people's slow accruement of their centuries of reflection and conviction; a civilization that was old and secure when Babylon was despised and undone; a civilization that still stands, though the pop-guns of peoples more anemic threaten it, and the bitter waters of rawer international policies snarl and encroach at the very foundations of her old walls, and at the very being of the paramount race of time. Let those who will, challenge the statement.

The very word K'üfu may look strange to up-to-date Western eyes. The "Britannica" prints it K'iuh-fow, the latest maps of the British War Office call it as arbitrarily, as these same great authorities have turned Tsinan Fu into Chi-Nanfu, and even the China Year Book goes a long way to make Chinese names look Western; easy to casual Western eyes. This undeniably is a convenience and it cannot be disputed that much haphazard license is unavoidable in translating by alphabet-formed English words, words original to the ideographic Chinese. But we who have taken so much from China, and are trying to take so much more, need we take from her

names that were imperial when our ancestors, matted of hair, unwashed, unlettered, wore paint and bestial savagery? Can we not leave China the names of her old, old cities and clans, the sound of them, a little the look of them, even if we feel a moral and entirely unselfish compulsion to replace her lutes by our sewing machines, flush her old wall cities with harsh electric-light, build life-and-joy destroying factories where once were her gardens—and peace, dress her sash-wearers in our own hideous, uncomfortable, unsuitable clothes, destroy her music, break her spirit, water her blood! Need the old Chinese names go? Perhaps in a few years more Tsinan Fu may boast a Halstead Street, Pekin a Fifth Avenue; a reform not too surprising from a cult that has turned the Chinese woman out of her courtyard, and clothed her in spats and a monocle.

What one good thing have we ever given or done to China? Just one. We have unbound the feet of her women. (If we have!) But the Manchu set that example before we shrilled and preached it. And against that one benefaction what is the length and the enormity of the tally against us?

What cause had we? What right?

Just beyond the city of K'üfu, in a larger rectangular garden that respect and tradition have segregated from the rest of the great K'ung cemetery stands the tomb-grave of him whom many who never have seen China believe to be the foremost man and teacher of all who have lived, a man whose life was full of sorrows, a man of whom neither crime, meanness nor cheapness can be proved, or sanely argued, a sage whose teachings and example have made for twenty-five centuries the Chinese a nation of gentlemen—four hundred million gentlemen!

—K'ung-tszze, who we call Confucius, and describe as a heathen whom wore a pigtail! Ah, well, we can't all be nations of gentlemen.

Confucianism sometimes is called the religion of China. Religion is an elastic term. But "code of conduct," "standard of thought," "imperishable example" all seem nearer definings of Confucianism. The great agnostic who sleeps at K'üfu; who lives wherever a Chinese, Manchu or Tartar holds and cherishes the incomparable heritage his ancestors bequeathed him; who will live and inspire and strengthen and preserve while China is China, is true to herself, preached no religion, as we use the word, and he disallowed none; he taught sanity, courtesy, justice to others; and it could be argued in great detail that Confucianism has effected more good, more beauty of life and of conduct, more human kindness, more religiousness in the deepest, truest sense than all the so-labeled "religions" put together.

Taoism, a Chinese religion of great Spiritual beauty and force, if the word "religion" justifiably may be used concerning the Chinese at all, has become a stench of superstition and fraud. Buddhism has dwindled, and hides its Chinese death throes in the by-ways and perishing monasteries of the North. Confucianism stands.

While Confucianism stands and lives China will last —in spite of us all and our associate Japan—and while Confucianism exists Chinese home life will be the happiest on Earth.

Tom Drew had learned little of Confucianism during all his long stay in Shantung. It did not interest him. It interests few of us. We are not in tune with it and the core things of China are not easily learned by outsiders. Sympathy is the only text-book in which a

Western mind can learn to read anything of the true and essential East.

Drew had gained much liking of China (it is a gain to any of us, the pale descendants of uncouth ancestral woad-wearers) but he had gained little sympathy, or understanding. For he was not built that way. Many white men are called to Asia, but few are chosen.

Left to his own devices, it's even betting that Tom Drew, who lived for months but a few miles from old K'üfu, would have returned to New York without ever having seen the grave of Confucius. But Yo Ya-ling had wished to show him the holiest, proudest spot in China. And he had "come along" with her contentedly enough, always ready for a walk, and a talk with Ya-ling; and he was doing his best to show more interest than he felt in the long-resting place of the "Superior Man."

The jangled music of mule-bells, the riot of the birds, the far-off look on Yo Ya-ling's face, and the mask-like look her ceremonial face-paint gave it, (for she was painted to-day as he had not seen her before) led more to silence than to friendly, casual chatting. For the most they went in silence—he and she.

But once the man, walking with his hand on her litter's flower-painted edge, leaned down a little towards her, and told her—

"Yesterday, in the city, I saw the woman you asked me to watch if I saw her. I saw her yesterday, and once before—on Wednesday. I have not seen you since Tuesday. I thought you'd rather I did not write. The first time it was in the wood north of your home. I was busy there with my net and came upon her suddenly. She was talking, whispering with two Japanese. She turned

her back and kept it to me, but I believe she did not think I knew her. They separated in a moment. I heard nothing they said. I followed the Japs cautiously. I knew who the woman was. I thought it would be more useful, if I found out who the men were. They gave me the slip—disappeared into the earth or up a tree-trunk, it seemed."

"And yesterday?"

"I was in the Street-of-Water-Pipes, and as I turned out of it, she was so deep in talk outside a melon-seller's stall that she did not see me at all. She was talking to a man—a German. I managed to follow him all right. He is here for a firm—Berlin—trying to establish a connection for clocks and gramophones. There is nothing against him, that I've found out yet—I've put it in motion—except that he is a German. He speaks Chinese better than I can yet. By bad luck they were pretty well through whatever they had to say to each other when I came along. All I heard was—he said, 'If there is any mistake it will mean bad punishment.' The woman said that she would make no mistake, and she reminded him that the mistakes made up to then had not been made by her. The man admitted it. He asked a question I did not get—I think it was a question. She laughed softly, and said, 'Yes, it is ready. Yes; they both will be there.' Then they parted."

"Did he give her money?"

"Not while I was there. Nothing passed between them—but what I have told you."

Yo Ya-ling sighed heavily; the only comment she made. They went on in silence but Drew kept his hand on Ya-ling's litter.

They had come in some state, she in her mule litter,

and a dozen of her father's bannermen before and behind her. A Yo did not go to the mound of great K'ung-tszze clad like a village woman, or on foot and unattended, like some itinerant "sew-sew" *amah*. But American citizenship has rights that are inalienable everywhere in this world, and presumably will be in all the worlds to come. Drew went on foot, and walked cheerily beside Ya-ling as she swung in her litter pole-supported between the shoulders of one sturdy, splendidly-caparisoned mule and the stout, sinewy flank of another caparisoned as splendidly. And Yo Ya-ling herself was attired even more magnificently than Drew before had seen her. The soft violet, embroidered satin of her "court robes" gleamed like a mist of amethyst moonlight between the sparkle of her jewels. Her tiny yellow hands were as hidden as Yo Z'in Tö's by the red and green star-light of her flashing rings. Her girdle flamed with its diamonds and topaz, and was softly musical from its dangling tassels of pearls, turquoise, diamonds and rubies. Her litter was no mat-domed thing of bamboo made for rough mountain-side journeying. The poles of camphor-wood were carved and inlaid, her cushions were regal, the covering that shaded the long, low-slung litter was matted-lace of embroidered peonies and moon-flowers, cut-out like the embroideries of a mandarin's best jacket, and crêpe-lined. Innumerable little tassels of silk and tiniest pearls and corals and beads of gold and silver hung from each great flower's petal; her curtains were painted silk, her cushioned seat and her foot-rest were painted lacquer. The mules were carillons of slow bell-music as they went; her litter drenched the waysides with its costly perfumes.

At every shrine or "pencil" they passed they paused

a moment to give a prayer and a coin, Ya-ling leaning from her litter, the bannermen prostrating themselves—Tom Drew watching an odd sight oddly.

At the great gate whose austere magnificence and beauty not Delhi, Agra, Constantinople or Tyre ever matched—still less matched its dignity—they halted. The mule-men held their charges taut, the bannermen turned their backs to the presence of their lord's daughter, and the lady Yo Ya-ling laid her hand in the hand Drew held to her, and stepped down from her litter, and they two went alone down the long avenue that leads to the most sacred grave in China—where every grave is sacred.

Drew had not known that cypress trees could gain such magnificence of height and girth, of branching or of somber color, as those that lined that great avenue. And he thought they glittered with reflected jewels that the girl's splendor of silks and jewels blazoned as she walked; thought the day pulsed with her jewels and with her earnest, girlish sweetness. They were the death-trees of China, sentineling the grave-avenue of him who gave China philosophy and continuity, pride and meekness, lasting courage, impregnable respose; and moving slowly between them like a music, a flower-souled Chinese girl, queen-like and vestal, became not an individual, not a unit, but a permanent presence—China quick and living, all the motherhood that has made China imperial, all the virginity that has made China lovely, exquisite and persistent, sex enthroned by patriotism, idealized by convention, reverenced and guarded for forty centuries.

When they had passed through the cypress-shadowed avenue and reached the ample open space where a great tree-grown mound stood, Yo Ya-ling prostrated herself

slowly and stayed prostrated for several moments. And the American man believed that he felt a presence.

Surely he did: the presence of all China, and throbbing in it the very soul of China's soul—Shantung!

He knew that the Sage's coffined ashes were under that great mound; the girl prostrate before it told him that.

The tablets, the statue, the smaller grave-mounds, one on either side of the great mound, Drew did not understand, scarcely cared to; but he understood something of what was entombed, embalmed, still potent and living, in that great central mound; understood in a small part what the girl's bending there meant; understood and felt as he had not even yet, until now, how unalterably alien he was from China—how everlastingly debarred from the Chinese people.

When Yo Ya-ling rose from her "worshiping," she stood beside him silently. She made no attempt to explain or tell, neither pointed out the words inscribed to the Sage by the Sung dynasty, cut by them on the statue of marble, as clear to read to-day as when the chisel's fresh dust still lay on the characters:—"The most sagely ancient Teacher; the all-accomplished, all-informed King." She said nothing of any of the imperial tablets of all China's dynasties, each glowing with praise of K'ung-tszze, that stand like stone flowers of reverence growing thickly in that garden where human sleepers and Confucius keep their lasting state. She did not tell Drew that K'ung-tszze's son—whom he most dearly had loved—and his grandson lay there at his feet.

It seemed to Drew that Yo Ya-ling, who neither moved nor spoke, was moving away from him, going from him

farther and farther, and never would come back. It almost seemed to him that all their friendship, all their cordial, easy comradeship had been a dream—a funny sort of dream.

The great mound was soft and feathered with trees. The acacias were very beautiful, the cypress trees were regal. A curious plant between them Drew had never seen before, nor one that resembled it. And a tree was growing there unlike any he had seen or seen pictured; it attracted and repelled him.

And again Yo Ya-ling, who had seemed but now to have left him, read his thought, in her Chinese way, and answered it—seeming so to come back to him a little—just a little way.

"It—growing low there—is the sacred Achillea, the divination plant. *That* is, the crystal tree. It grows nowhere else—it will grow only here. It is *his* tree. Always it grows here. Always it has grown here since the great-one's going bereft our Empire, orphaned a people. Never will it grow elsewhere. And it is on the branches of the crystal tree that the gauze-flowers that we call "Cherry Jewels" breed. They will breed nowhere else. It was the butterfly of Confucius himself that you came to China to get—and to take."

There were butterflies in the air above them now. Except when the stinging cold of the northern winter has come to kill, starve, imprison, always there are butterflies in the Shantung air—always hanging aerial gardens trembling with the throbbing flower-life of butterflies.

As if to prove the word of Yo Ya-ling, down from the gold meshed high-air of the Chinese day, a red butter-

fly floated slowly—a cherry-colored Imperial—floated down and down until it rested on a low branch of a crystal tree.

It was lovelier than the one that had lured him into Yo's garden, larger, more perfectly marked, more exquisitely fluted; the most beautiful butterfly Tom Drew had ever seen; he believed it was the most beautiful butterfly that Earth, or Heaven, ever had seen.

Drew moved on it slowly—a step. The Cherry Imperial did not move. The man raised a hand that ached. His lips were parted. The butterfly was motionless. Drew, scarcely moving, scarcely breathing, leaned toward it very gently. Yo Ya-ling touched her scarf—a film of gauze, but its mesh was tight—held her scarf's end towards Drew's hand, her eyes curious but inscrutable on Drew's face. He could not have seen what she did—his eyes and his being were riveted on the crimson loveliness resting lazily on the crystal tree—but he must have felt what she did, for his fingers found the gauze, touched it, took it, moved it, gently as a zephyr's breath, towards the crystal-tree's low branch.

Then—Drew laid her scarf's end back across Yo Ya-ling's sleeve, and turned away with a hard breath, a catch of pain that in a woman's throat must have been a sob.

Yo Ya-ling smiled at Tom Drew. Had he seen her then, seen that smile, its sweetness and its nearness, what it gave and what it accepted, Drew must have felt that she had not gone far and farther away from him, and he might have felt less alien there, less far from home—a man's home and home-keeping.

But Drew did not see the smile Yo Ya-ling gave him,

with her dark velvet eyes, with the red curves of her soft velvet mouth.

Nor did he see how her little fingers touched her scarf where it lay across her sleeve.

Near the grave-mound of the grandson of the sage stands a diminutive Chinese house. Ya-ling waited there for Drew to come to her, and when in a moment he had, she spoke to him as friendly and sisterly as she always had in her father's gardens and her mother's courtyards.

"Tze-Kung's mat hut stood there—Tze-Kung, the disciple who loved him so that when he who teaches us went to On High, Tze-Kung built his mat hut here, and lived in it for five years, sat in it by day, lay in it by night, through all the fire of summer, through all the Shantung ice of terrible winter, stayed always here because he so loved the nearness of his master's grave. This house marks and honors the spot of Tze-Kung's fidelity and love."

"Five years!"

"We Chinese love our dead very dearly," the girl said simply. "I could tell you a thousand such Chinese stories. Do you wonder that we fear what you call death not at all, we to whom it is home-going and a closer reunion with those from whom we have never parted?"

"No," the American answered gently, "I see. I begin to see."

"A man—it is the story I love most—I will tell you only one—then we go—a man—his name was Wang P'ou—was the only son of a woman who so feared thunder and lightning that a great storm maddened her with a terror that always made her ill, and threatened her life even. At storm time Wang P'ou never left her, led her

down into a room he had made for her underground, a room into which the lightning could not pierce, to which the thunder-crashes came but a whisper, and held her in his arms, soothed her, promised her that the storm would pass harmlessly away, and should not reach or hurt her while it stayed. He was offered a rich appointment in another province; he refused it because he would not leave his mother, or risk that a thunder-storm might come to torture her on their long journey, if he took her with him. He kept his life but for his mother. When she died, whenever a storm brewed, Wang P'ou hurried to his mother's grave—always—rose up in illness as in health—at day, or in the night time—threw himself on it, calling down to her, 'Mother, I am here. Be not in fear, my mother; thy son is with you; no harm shall reach you!' And while the storm lasted Wang P'ou lay face down on his mother's grave, his robe and his arms spread over it, and comforted her, until the last soft, fleeting raindrop had fallen, and the great day-star had made her dripping mound-tree dry and warm again, to each smallest leaf-cup, each bark crack. If the storm passed away in night-time, or at sunset, Wang P'ou stayed with his mother until the day-star had soaked the graveyard with heat and comfort, since the great-moon-lantern, and all its star children and servants light the night but do not warm it. Our northland storms rage for moons sometimes. While storm stayed, Wang P'ou stayed with his mother.''

''I like that,'' the American said heartily.

''Once,'' Ya-ling began softly, forgetting that she had promised only one story, ''a wife—''

''Hush!'' Drew commanded sharply, turning his face away from the girl, bending his ear toward the ''hut''

house of Tze-Kung. His face grew stern and tense as he listened. He swung back to Yo Ya-ling quickly, caught her by her shoulders, almost roughly, and pushed her before him, away from the house.

"Ya-ling!" he both entreated and urged imperatively, "you trust me?"

"I trust you," Yo Ya-ling answered.

"You know I am your friend!"

"We know."

"You remember what I did for Yo Ki?" Strange that Tom Drew had turned boaster!

"No Yo will forget it."

"Pay that debt now"—he still thrust her away, farther toward the great entrance avenue—"Yo Ki loved me!"

"Always the Yos will love and honor you." Ya-ling spoke a little joltingly, because so fast a man's hands were thrusting her, almost jerking, towards the avenue, but her eyes were clear and even in his.

"Obey me now! In Yo Ki's name I tell you to do it. He tells you to do it!" He caught her up in his arms, carrying her at a run to the avenue's opening and put her down hurriedly. "Go! Go home! Run! You are not to look back. Get in your litter. Tell the mule-men to thrash those mules. Go now."

Did Yo Ya-ling hesitate for an instant's fragment? She never knew—neither then nor after.

She looked into Drew's eyes, and she smiled at him—a smile that, if he did not in fulness of vision understand, will stay a light in his memory while he lives—and then before his hands on her shoulders again could swing her about with her back to him, her back to the grave of Confucius, she turned and sped alone down the

path they had come together, and did not look back.

Before the Chinese girl had passed many of the great cypress trees—and Yo Ya-ling ran fast and well—Drew was back at the house of Tze-Kung the faithful disciple, thrusting a heavy pounding shoulder, that had not forgotten what Harvard had taught it, against the fastened portal.

It was well for Tom Drew that no Chinese custodian saw him.

The portal gave.

In, Tom looked about him quietly, keeping his head and his coolness, saving his strength and his wind for what he might, and believed that he should, have to do —do with strength, speed, courage, coolness and excellent instant forethought.

Millions to come were not the best or the manliest part of the inheritance and birthright of Powers Drew's son.

No; there was no clock here; it was not a clock he'd caught the tick-tick of through the sound of Ya-ling's voice. Where was the infernal thing? Could he get at it?

It came from under his feet—down in the ground—over there to the right: tick-tick, tick-tick.

On his hands and knees Drew tore at the soft flooring from which one wrench had dislodged the white rice-straw mat. Yes; some one had dug here before him, who or when, how or why, the American did not guess. There was no time to fritter away in speculations that could wait. He *felt* that there was an evil thing down in the ground, and that he must get to it. "Tick-tick, tick-tick," it called him, "tick-tick" it jeered at him. He had not hated the Hun that had brained the Detroit

boy in the war as he hated the fiend down under the hut of Tze-Kung.

Why? Drew gave that no thought.

A down-sloping, underground tunnel ran towards the great grave-mound of the Sage. It was not encased. He had to burrow through the soft fallen earth that choked it loosely. Fortunately Tom Drew did not have to burrow far or long, or he could not have gone on breathing. The "tick-tick" hammered louder and nearer. "I'm coming, old dear!" the angry man was foolish enough to tell it, and for his pains and his foolishness his mouth was filled with earth. Drew spat it out as well as he could, and crawled and fought on with a tight-shut mouth. He kept his eyes shut too. He could see nothing in here. But he still could hear, and he could smell. He smelt petrol—a slight, unmistakable smell. It grew stronger. "Tick-tick, tick-tick" grew louder. The sound spat up at him now; his face was over it. Was he "going-west," buried like a blind earth-worm down in the ground of a Chinese charnel-yard? Perhaps so; but he didn't give a damn. He wanted to get that tick-tick fiend-thing. There was nothing else he wanted—nothing else that interested him. He scooped earth away with his hands, scooped earth away to right and to left, scooped in cold fury, while his face ran sweat and his breath came in sobbing pants from lungs that were suffering and flagging.

Scooping for it desperately, the man over-reached it at first, and caught his fingers in a coil of wet tow and straw. The petrol-smell was a blast.

He had it.

He found it, touched it, gripped it; and crawled back again—crawling painfully backwards on one hand and

knees and belly, pushing his way out with his feet, as a swimmer pushes sea water away—the round metal thing he had kept his word to, and come to, held fast in the clinch of a furious but careful hand, clutched in one arm against his breast, under his chin. It might explode any moment. The menace and warning "tick-tick, tick-tick" neither slowed nor quickened. Tom Drew gave less than a damn.

Back in the little dishevelled room—its floor torn up and dirt-littered, its entrance crashed in—Drew waited just long enough to throw off his light coat. One can go quicker without the lightest coat, and his was heavier now with the earth it had brought back from his burrowing.

Then Tom Drew ran.

His speed and his shoulders are spoken of at Harvard yet. But his old Alma Mater never had known how Tom Drew could run. Only the watching gods of China and perchance the spirit of K'ung-tszze will ever know that.

Drew never knew, or cared, how he got out of the Confucian annex to the K'ung cemetery—whether he tore through a hedge, or scaled a wall. But he did keep his head, he bolted away as inconspicuously as he could, he went in a direction directly opposite to that in which he had driven Yo Ya-ling. And he did get away, unmolested, and, for all he knew then or ever learned, unobserved; and he took the bomb with him.

And it was not until he was in mid-ocean again that Drew realized in the least why he had stayed in the K'ung cemetery when he had sent Yo Ya-ling from it; why he had not fled from it with her, and merely reported to an outer gate-keeper, or, not seeing one, to

Yo's head bannerman what he suspected in the memorial house of K'ung-tszze's faithful disciple and friend.

For not even the explanation he gave in answer to a living K'ung presently was full and exact.

The bomb was heavy, though not particularly heavy, but Drew was tired, and his arms ached and rebelled from his playing of "mole," and the bomb ticked on like a time-keeper of Hell.

By wit or by chance (or perhaps the gods took a hand) he cut across a zig-zag patch of country-side that was sparse of peasant life and of travel.

Long-tethered camels browsing in a sweet-grassed meadow craned their necks at him, indifferently curious, as he passed; and again and again some donkey brayed at him; a child laughed at him from a persimmon tree, three toddlers screamed, and ran hand-in-hand bleating from his path, an old crone whom he waked from her doze as he flew by her doorway loom cursed him—and her words were foul; dogs that Drew neither saw nor heard barked at him like demons, and one snapped at his heels—few Chinese dogs like the scent-signal of white-skinned human flesh; a peasant—carrying by his shoulders two heavy buckets of the precious manure that never is wasted in China, and least of all in Shantung where industry and scrupulous not over-nice economy have turned the Empire's poorest province into a garden and granary—made way for him with anxious speed. But no one molested or attempted to stay him.

The man with the bamboo buckets had thought him a devil, and Drew looked it now. He was matted with underground soil, his face was raw with running sweat, and his eyes were wild with fatigue.

Drew never knew how far he ran or how long, but he knew what he was trying to find—a deep pool of water, a deep cleft in an uninhabited hillside where he could drop the infernal bomb far down to harmlessness. His one object in life now was to defeat that ball of iron that ticked steadily on against his heaving breast.

Shantung seemed as poolless as an Afric desert; and he had not reached the hill's side yet.

But as he came to, and began swiftly and painfully to climb its gentle slope, a man met and challenged him at last, and when Drew gave no answer turned back and raced beside him—ran as fast as the American did, and ran far more easily; for K'ung Kuo-fan was not spent or tired.

"Go from me, I carry a bomb," the American spluttered feebly—even his parched lips were exhausted, his dust-caked tongue was swollen and stiff—when he saw who the other was. "Run from me."

"Not K'ung thy friend," the Chinese replied. "Let me carry it for you—you are spent, I am fresh. Where would you have me take it for you?"

"Run—run, as fast as you can! The infernal thing is set to explode—it may any moment."

"So I supposed."

"Run! Run like Hell, K'ung!"

"It is not for a man," the Chinese said softly, "to run from a foe, still less from a friend. Give me that fiend-thing, Drew."

"I'll see you damned first. Get out of my way."

"I am not in your way," K'ung said gently. "But I keep at your side. Where do you take it? At least I can guide you; there is no path here. Where is it you seek?"

"Water—a deep gulch—a place to pitch the damned thing where it can do no harm. Tell me where—quickly, man—and then for God's sake go!"

"I stay with my friend," K'ung Kuo-fan repeated, tucking his heavy skirts up about his hips as they ran—tucking them up that he might run the faster, jump the surer, though skirt-encumbered as he was, and little used to move faster than dignity licensed, K'ung Kuo-fan easily could have out-distanced Drew now. "This way!"

They tore through a thicket of low scrub-oaks, jumped a brook that was but a thin trickle. K'ung sprang from a boulder to one lower down. Drew took the leap cleanly and sure, no mean jump for a man in training, and as he did K'ung's heart went cold for his friend.

"Let me carry it—a moment's rest for your arms," the Chinese begged again. "I will not leave you nor move a pace from your side while you are in peril. The bomb may explode any instant. We both are dead, if it does, and half this hillside will be our unmarked burial mound. What matter who holds it as it kills us? Give me my share of our death chase, I entreat you, my friend."

"You have no share in it. It is mine," Drew gasped hoarsely. "I found it. I'll not let go, till I throw it down—into safety."

The Chinese did not speak again—he would not cost Drew another breath. But he led their perilous way as fast as he saw the other could keep the pace he set.

"There!" K'ung Kuo-fan pointed to a sudden gulch in the hill where down hundreds of feet, between narrow walls of rock, water faintly gleamed.

Drew lifted his arms. They refused and fell back

on his breast. Then the man mustered his strength, commanded his quivering body, leaned a little over the sharp edge of the terrible crevice, lifted his arms and what his strained hands held—he did not know that K'ung Kuo-fan, firm-braced, on feet well dug in, threw a strong arm about a friend's waist, a limpet-close arm, and held him safe as he leaned out over the rift of death.

Drew threw.

They saw the bomb go; they did not see it strike; the mountain lake was too far below them, where they stood. No sound came back to them. A pair of wild geese flew screaming over their heads, a lark trilled a passionate bar of love to its mate, high up in a soap tree. And Tom Drew sobbed.

It was almost the sob of a frightened child. Then —"That's that!" he said with a shrug that was not much of a shrug, and a laugh that was a very poor sort of laugh indeed. "George!" I'm winded."

K'ung Kuo-fan took away his arm quietly, and sat down on a stone, well away from the slit in the hillside. "Have you got a cigarette?" he asked.

"In my coat—I threw it off."

"And I have neither. Rather a pity we have none—a smoke would be good while we rest a little."

K'ung asked no questions. But when presently he began to speak of something else, Drew broke in at once.

"I'll explain now, K'ung Kuo-fan. You have a right to know—you Chinese who hold all graves sacred—and that one most of all."

K'ung did not move, but his black eyes glittered suddenly.

"Some one is trying to wreck Confucius' grave—"

K'ung Kuo-fan sprang up with a cry that made wild geese scream again overhead. Then he controlled himself, or seemed to, and knelt down very close to Drew. "Go on," he whispered.

"Miss Yo and I were standing outside that little house where she told me a friend of your prophet's had lived for years—" (In all his long glorious life of service one thing Confucius never once did was prophesy. He held it in abhorrence, pronounced against it. But K'ung Kuo let Drew's word pass. He was accustomed to hear such blunders from Western lips.) "She was telling me something, I forget what—all of a sudden I heard something tick—our friend down there—I knew what it was—or believed I did. I sent Ya-ling home —told her to get down that long avenue we'd come in by, as fast as ever she could—saw her start—her mule litter was at the gate. When she'd gone I made back for the house, licketty click, and burst into it."

"You broke into Tze-K'ung's memorial?"

"That is what I did. Had a quick squint round, for a clock, in case I'd made a mistake. There was no nice home-keeping clock on the mantel-piece"—K'ung smiled slightly—"but his Nibs down there in the bath-tub was ticking away somewhere—down in the ground, I soon discovered, and then I knew that I was barking up the right tree, and I got busy and dug it out, and took it for a nice airing, a nice long country walk."

"Why did you not go home with Yo Ya-ling, and report what you suspected?"

"Never thought of it. Guess my curiosity was up and doing. Never have been much of a meddlesome Mattie up to now—I don't think—but must have been this

time. And if I had—gone on off with Ya-ling, and reported what I suspected when I got a chance, that big grave-mound might be a burning dust-heap now."

"And you risked your life, to save from desecration the grave of our Great One," the Chinese whispered softly—but his Chinese face was flame.

"Well"—Drew hesitated—"perhaps it boils down to that, but I don't believe I did much thinking about it. Look here, K'ung, I don't want any credit, or wreaths of roses—"

K'ung Kuo-fan smiled, and laid his hand on the edge of Tom Drew's soft cuff. "You shall have no credit that does not belong to you, and no rose-wreaths, no Chinese firecrackers. I know that you do not like them. You shall not be annoyed in return for the great thing you have done this day. It must be traced and punished, of course—"

"You bet it must," Drew agreed with feeling.

"To have had the memorial of pious Tze-Kung destroyed would have devastated the heart of China."

"Well, the little house would have gone up in smoke too—not much doubt of that—but it was the Confucius mound the bomb was aimed at"—the yellow hand tightened on Drew's cuff, blue veins knotted on K'ung Kuo-fan's forehead—"it was in a ditch of a tunnel that the blighters had dug down to the big grave. I suppose it was easiest for them to begin it from under the shelter of the disciple's house, but that tunnel made for underneath the big grave, or I'm a Dutchman. It was all chock-a-block with shavings and tow, and tarred rope swimming in petrol. Can't you smell me yet? I can. And when the bomb had blown up, and all the petrol-

soaked stuff lighted, that big grave would have exploded with it."

K'ung Kuo-fan rocked on his knees in volcanic passion. A Chinese gentleman—and all Chinese are gentlemen in manner—must not show emotion and to gesture is ill-bred, but every obedience has its human limits——its breaking point. K'ung Kuo-fan rocked and gibbered. The things he cried out were infamous, a tangle of ribald language—Chinese—of which Drew could understand but little. One or two unsavory maledictions against China's immemorial foe he did catch.

"No," Tom said, "I don't believe it was the Japs this time. It was a German bomb. That I'll swear to; I've seen them before."

"The putrid dwarfs are hand and glove with the Germans when it suits them. The foul ones of Nippon are rice and salt with any people, with each in turn, when it suits them. It is England's turn to-day—ours too! To-morrow it will be your own country's!"

"I rather think not," the American drawled drily.

"Japanese or German, it shall be ferreted out."

"I hope so," Drew repeated.

When the Chinese had foamed and frothed some time longer, piling curse on curse, horrid oath on oaths more horrid, he folded his hands once more in his sleeves, and sat down quietly beside his friend.

"China is your debtor," he said slowly and earnestly. "Never will you or the sons of your sons be forgotten in Chinese prayers. Had that sacred spot been injured, China would have been riven. China would have been awake then. War would have belched and flamed here, as it has not yet in all our centuries. It is not for me

to speak all that my heart cries to you, for I am of his blood, descended directly, as are so many, in and near his own City of K'üfu, from his holy loins. But—oh! my honored heart's friend—while my seed lives and gives life it will not forget you. Say to me what modesty you will of what you have done this day, this, and this alone, is truth; you risked your own life to save the grave of our Sage."

"Well," Drew said, laughing softly, "I have a lot of Chinese friends—all the Yos, and you—who would have felt terribly grieved if that grave had been blown up."

"Kwan—our Mother of Mercy—"

"And, I tell you, K'ung, it made me mad when I realized that the cursed thing might have gone off while Ya-ling was kneeling there praying—and—"

Drew broke off—lamely.

K'ung Kuo-fan looked away—far away with his inscrutable eyes across the hill-tops where the sunset began now to paint its magic brocade of burning tinsels.

CHAPTER XXVII

PILKINGTON and Brown were "up country," on leave; Burton was in Shanghai on business. And Walter Swift had suggested that he should stay with Tom at the chummery for a week or two. Tom had assented willingly. He was not sorry to have his countryman tuck in with him at the emptied chummery —but Swift's suggestion had surprised him. It was almost an axiom that Walter Swift rarely slept away from his own vine and fig-tree. He was an incurable

itinerant, but always he took his own home with him, or made it about him where he chanced to camp—on a mountain, in a temple's guest-rooms. He detested other people's houses after bed time, and, though no one had ever heard him say it, every one who knew him knew it. That he had stayed "over night" with the Rutherford-Carmichaels once or twice had been unprecedented. His inviting himself to the chummery had puzzled Tom even more than it had pleased and—to be explicitly frank—flattered the younger American. Aline and her husband pretended that it puzzled them very much; at least, Aline pretended and asserted it, and Giggles did not contradict her.

The statement was not exactly true. The idea of Swift's chummery residence had originated in the nimble mind of Aline Rutherford-Carmichael. And Swift himself had sighed a little perturbedly as he finally consented.

Most of us have our secrets and secrets are kept best at home. But the tippler cannot often leave his flask at home behind him when he visits or journeys. The lover *must* take her picture with him, even when he would not for continents have his tender ailment suspected. Walter Swift had brought his secret with him, and had ensconsed it and its telltale impedimenta with him in Tom's chummery. Tom had not found Swift out; Hing had—and curled his yellow nose a little at the discovery, which is as far as a Chinese nose often can be induced to curl. Hing gave no other sign. It did not interest him; and Hing kept his counsel.

Walter felt securely safe this afternoon. He knew that Hing had been sent to K'üfu on a collection of errands and had "late leave" as well and Tom had

gone butterflying and would not be back until after sunset, if then. Swift's ears were good; he'd hear any one approaching the chummery, and the chances were that no one would. So, he had brought his silks and colors into the sitting-room—he liked the light best there—and had established them on the big table to his liking.

Walter Swift was painting fans, trying to fashion his work a little—meekly, but a trifle hopefully—after the inimitable work of the master fan-painter Yo Wing So.

And when Swift had mixed his colors, arranged his pans, fluted and shaped his brush, and given his soul to the plumage of a heron's wing, it is probable that the storms that rage about the crest of Omi in winter's stormtime might have surged about that Shantung chummery and buffeted it across the Yellow River without Swift's hearing it, if it had not shaken hand or silk or altered his light. If the hand of the amateur has the lesser cunning, perhaps his eager soul finds the greater absorption.

He did not hear Tom and Giggles coming, and they stood in the door-way staring at him in foolish masculine amazement long before he looked up and saw them—and blushed miserably. He had not heard them, though they had been speaking busily as they came. Standing in the doorway they had dulled his light. It was that that made him look up impatiently—look up to redden guiltily.

"Oh—hello!" Walter Swift said lamely.

"Didn't know you did it," Rutherford-Carmichael blurted out pleasantly.

"I don't," Swift answered quickly, "I got tired of reading, didn't care to go out—so just daubed a bit."

He threw a paint rag across the table carelessly and a heron's wing was ruined.

Rutherford said no more about it; Tom took no notice. They both had kind hearts, and both were well-bred. And perhaps the native good manners of each had caught a truer sweetness, a softer fineness from the Chinese they had mingled with—as the roughest manners must that are not incurably crass and offensive. China will give graciously to all hands that can take of her imperial bounty, and the Chinese have nothing finer to give than the sunny beauty of their flawless, unfailing courteousness.

"Have you been butterflying too?" Swift asked Rutherford, as Tom put down his net and case.

" 'Fraid I don't know a butterfly from a beetle," Rutherford-Carmichael retorted. "No; Drew and I ran into each other at the gate. I wanted to see you both, rather."

"Well—here we both are," Drew stated a little unnecessarily, as he filled glasses at the side table.

But, if the Englishman had anything of importance to say, he put the saying off unconscionably.

It was not until they had eaten a cook-served dinner —for Hing had not returned—and sat smoking to an accompaniment of sudden rain, that he said uneasily, not looking at Drew as he said it,

"You remember I put Yo wise, or tried to, about something that I knew was brewing about the Benevolent Crane. Yo Wing So was grateful—they always are—and I hope a point or two I gave him has been useful to him or his friends. But I suspect that most of what I told him, Yo Wing So already knew more about than I did—though he did not say so. Well—

now—that is—there is something else—very much more serious—and I dare not attempt to warn Yo of it. It would mean his knife in my throat before I'd well begun—and no blame to Yo Wing So that it did! But Yo must hear it, or some one must that can deal with it and will. Even if Yo heard me, which he would not, he would not believe me. It's up to you, Drew, I'm afraid. You may feel that you simply cannot speak to Yo about it. I think you will feel so. You can warn the sister though—or some one there. *You* can say anything to any of the Yos—even to Yo himself, if you can bring yourself to do it. Yo is as fine a man as God ever made. And we can't sit still and see him worse than murdered in his own *k'o-tang*, and his entire clan in disgrace—the one disgrace that nothing can wash away in China, especially here in Shantung where even a peasant almost never gives his daughter to be any man's legal concubine—or number two."

Drew listening tensely now wondered what Rutherford-Carmichael was driving at, and why he took so long to get there. But Englishmen were all like that

Walter Swift was listening too. But there was no question, only deep concern, in his mind. He was listening gravely, as if to a story he knew too well, and disliked.

"Yo—I loathe to say it, but I've got to—Yo is being betrayed by—by his own daughter. And she is in the worst peril a girl can be in, *the* peril. That's the brink the Yos are on—and suspect nothing about it. It is a bad thing to ask you"—Rutherford drew his handkerchief across his lips before he went on, and the others neither moved nor spoke. The rain came hard and fast now. "But you can give a hint of some sort—to the

sister or some one of them. Nothing but its desperateness could make it possible to even hint it to a girl, but I don't want Yo himself to know, if he can be spared it—for his own sake, and because he'll kill his own child, if he learns it. We can think of no one else but you to get at it—my wife and I—so—we think you will do it, tell one of them, or some friend perhaps—some one—the one you, who know them so well, think most to be trusted to *keep* it—spare Yo and the wretched girl—trusted to act at once and effectively—to tell the right one—blowed if I know who is the right one—to tell them what I am going to tell you. Then you—you and she, or you and he—can put your heads together—tell the mother perhaps. She'll not kill her girl, or see her killed, if she can help it. If Yo ever learns what is happening, and has been for some time now, he'll kill the girl. Chinese have not changed in that! Well deserved, this time too, in my opinion! But—if only for Yo's sake— It's awkward talking about any woman like this—Chinese or no Chinese—but, well,—Miss Yo visits a Japanese man—alone. She must be saved from the worse sure to follow—or—well, no need to say it—we all know—"

"You are mistaken," Drew spoke hotly, but more with contempt than anger—and far more coolly than either of them had expected. "Possibly some *amah*—" he thought he knew the clue to that— "But not his daughter."

"I have *seen*," Rutherford said gravely. No one could doubt his word—no one who knew him. And his tone left no room for doubt.

"My God!" Drew's face twitched. "It will break her sister's heart. Yo Su? Impossible!"

"No, no," Rutherford said quickly, "not your little friend, Drew. Certainly not. It is the older girl—"

"You God-damned liar!" Drew crouched towards the other like a jungle panther. "I'll kill you for that!"

Swift rose quickly, moved between them—but Tom Drew meant it. Every fiber of him, soul and body, meant it.

"Tom," Walter pleaded, but it was not Swift that averted a desperate fracas; nor was it even Rutherford's sweet-souled patience.

They were bitterly sorry for him—both these older friends of his—sorry because it had told them both where Tom Drew was, told them what he felt for a Chinese girl, though not for the sister that Rutherford-Carmichael had believed, and Swift had suspected, that Tom cared for. They realized instantly how Rutherford's statement about Yo Ya-ling must have stung him. And they both knew that his caring for a Chinese—even, as they both hoped temporarily—was not short of tragedy. To Walter Swift the catastrophe loomed blacker, threatened more, than it did to the Englishman. Swift had seen the same tragedy before, and at close outcome—knew the gall of its possible ending. The thought of it revolted his American taste more than it could an Englishman's. And Swift knew, as Rutherford-Carmichael could not, the peculiar tenacity of such of his countrymen as all the Drews were. Both the older men understood clearly that this was not one of the cheap inter-racial entanglements that were all too common in the Orient. Yo Wing So's daughters could not be treated lightly. Though now, to be sure, one of them, and she the elder and more responsible, had erred despicably, and in a regrettable

way, that "let Drew out." But the whole thing was wretchedly terrible—deplorable. Drew must be feeling what he had just learned bitterly. Rutherford-Carmichael did not intend tamely to let Drew assault him, nor did Swift intend to stand by idly and watch Tom do it; but they felt for him keenly, and with enormous patience.

But nothing a man could say or do could have stayed Drew now. No word of theirs could sprinkle cool patience on his red distemper.

He had crouched to spring, and in a fraction of a moment he and his rage would have been strenuous work for both Rutherford and Swift.

Then—"Tom," a voice called brokenly, and the crisis had made way for another—at least for a time.

Drew started to his feet. The other men turned sharply toward the verandah door.

"Tom," Yo Ya-ling wailed again as she stood in the open doorway. Her hair was loosened about her, as her cloak's hood fell back, her clothes were heavy with the rain that dripped from them, her eyes were wild with terror and her face was the pallid gray that abject and tortured emotion gives to Chinese faces.

Drew went to her instantly, and threw his arm about her shoulders.

What his wild outbreak had told the others a moment ago, it had told him as clearly. He had understood what the fury pounding through his swelling veins had meant; knew why his impulse had been to kill Rutherford-Carmichael; knew as he threatened it that he loved Yo Ya-ling.

He drew her in, and pushed her gently down into the chair Swift had quitted. Rutherford-Carmichael

bent down and lifted the girl's sodden cloak from the floor, where Drew had thrown it, and spread it across two chairs to drip, and to dry somewhat. This was no time to call a boy to take it to the heat of the cook-house. Swift went to the side table and filled a glass with port. Drew took the glass from him when Swift brought it, and at Drew's word, Yo Ya-ling drank—drained slowly the glass Tom Drew held carefully to her stiff gray lips.

The men waited.

Yo Ya-ling was panting piteously as she leaned back wearily, Drew's hand still on her shoulder. Swift went from the room and was back again almost instantly. And as he came back, a Chinese will conquered the quivering weakness of the girl's spent and trembling body. Ya-ling began to speak but Drew checked her—

"Wait a little. Rest first."

"We must not," Ya-ling answered him. She looked about her. "We are all alone—we four?"

"Quite alone. No one shall come," Rutherford-Carmichael told her reassuringly.

"Kwan Yin-ko is merciful to me that you are here—just you; all of you. I need you all. You will help me. You are our friends. You will let escape never what I say?"

Swift and Rutherford bowed gravely, and gentle as Walter Swift's eyes were on her, the English eyes were kindest. Drew merely kept his hand on her shoulder. There was no need for him to assure her that she could trust him, that what she confided to him would be sacred.

"You must come with me—save me from my sin and

shame,'' she told them, in a voice that must have rasped her tender young throat.

The Englishman shot a quick, pitying look at Drew. Drew would know now, for Yo Ya-ling herself had told it. But Walter Swift watched the Chinese girl herself and curiously. A new suspicion came to him as she spoke. He understood what she had said differently. To Walter Swift her words had not meant what they meant to the Englishman who heard them. Walter Swift knew that in China there is no individual—only family. Something of what Rutherford had seen at Osuro's gate-side, Swift too had seen, but for the first time, a doubt of its true significance had challenged him.

As for Tom Drew, Ya-ling's words meant to him that she was in sore sorrow, and that she needed him; meant nothing else. Nothing else mattered. And not his mother could have made him doubt Yo Ya-ling—not his mother's dear spirit come from its grave to say it.

He knew now that he loved Yo Ya-ling. It was not in him to doubt her. He did not understand what she had said, but he had no need to.

In the fury of the storm there in the chummery room, and the noise of the lesser outer storm's rain and wind, they had not heard the quick hoof-falls of Yo Ya-ling's horse as she had come. But Walter Swift was listening now, and he heard a padded shoe that the others did not. Swift went to the inner door, reached a hand through it, drew back his arm, and closed the door. His arms were full of hot, dry bath towels—big ones.

Swift knelt down by Ya-ling's chair and began drying her still sodden garments gently; went on at that service for her, while she told her broken story, breaking it,

choking over it, blanching as she forced out her words; trembling, then bracing herself again and clinging to Tom Drew's hand.

In China the human body is sacred. Few Chinese are so uncouth as to encroach upon that fine corporal dignity ever. The Chinese do not touch each other. Perhaps that is why Chinese hands are so fine and psychic. Friends meeting or parting do not shake each other's hands as we do—it would be an insult; they shake their own hands in a nicer salutation. They think our touching of each other—even in friendly handclasp—a rudeness, if not a coarseness. What they think of our ready kissing and of other things which we—finest flowers of civilization—do, no Chinese words can tell, and English words should be shamed to tell. But even Chinese ceremony has its limits, as Chinese laws of bearing do; this was no time for ceremony. Walter Swift, whom her father loved, went on drying Yo Ya-ling deftly and fearlessly. He even pushed away her loose sleeve to comfort her delicate wet arm with a heated towel's warm friction. As he did so, a tiny sodden yellow head shot out at him angrily, and sharp pin-point teeth snapped at him. And they saw that a tiny, soaked sleeve-dog was huddled miserably in Ya-ling's arm's crook.

The girl looked down a moment, and bade the half-drowned angry atom be still.

"Yes, please dry N'zö-ping for me," she begged. "We must take him with us. We need him."

The Englishman picked up a towel from the pile on the floor, prisoned the dog, that yelped at him for his kindness, in the hot Turkish toweling, and took it so. After all it was an Englishman's office to medicine and

valet all dog-flesh. And there were few better "vets" in Britain than Lord Rutherford-Carmichael. But those English hands never till now had ministered to or held any dogling not a new-born pup, so rat-small as this one.

"You must not let N'zö-ping get loose," Yo Ya-ling admonished, as she relinquished the sleeve-dog to Rutherford, and handed him the cord by which N'zö-ping had been tethered to her. "He is most important to us when we go. We must go quickly."

"He'll not get away from me, Miss Yo," Rutherford-Carmichael promised, as he sat down and began toileting N'zö-ping vigorously but kindly.

Swift went on drying Yo Ya-ling, as best he could; the English peer went on drying a nine-inch long and very snappy sleeve-dog most efficiently; Drew kept his hand on Ya-ling's shoulder; Ya-ling kept her clinging hand in Drew's and told them what she had to tell.

"My horse is swift," she began. "One of you can ride with me perhaps, with great care. We must ride a rush ride. What have you here, what to ride?"

"Rickshaws," Rutherford answered.

"No! The pull-men and the push-men would know. We must go alone. No one must know where we go—or why."

"Pilkington's motor-bike is in the bike-house," Drew said. "I'll have it made ready. Rutherford can run it—he knows them, and Swift can hold on behind him. Tell them, will you, Swift?"

Walter Swift smiled, and sighed in his gray mustache as he went to the door and clapped his hands. "Can do," they heard a Chinese voice say outside the door, and Swift reclosed the door, and knelt down again, and

went on with the kindly work Drew's request had interrupted.

"Where are we going, Ya-ling?" Drew asked her gently.

"To the house of a Japanese named Osuro," the girl stiffened in her chair as she said it, her tortured eyes pleaded with them that they would hear it mercifully. "Yo Su is with him—my sister—" her voice broke into sobbing.

Swift worked on steadily. But N'zö-ping gave a yelp of torment. Big English fingers busy at the wee thing's ruffled throat, in Rutherford's startled amazement, almost had strangled Yo Su's sleeve-dog.

Ya-ling controlled herself again, and this time she went steadily on to the end. There was no moment to be wasted, but they must understand before they best could serve her.

"I have feared, without knowing what I feared, for some moons now. You first made me fear," she looked down an instant at Swift, and then in her shame looked quickly away.

"Me?" Swift was astonished now.

"At the garden party. You said you had seen me the day before, said you had tried to overtake me. You accepted it that you had made the mistake—when I said it. But I knew—saw—that you had no doubt that you had seen *me*. It stayed in my mind. You told me I had worn a dress of Europe. I did not think there was other of its stuff in Shantung. A few days more, and one day I saw a stain of grass on that gown-skirt, and a thorn-cut. They had not come there in my wearing, I knew. Again I missed a garment. It was given back. Who put it back, and when, I could

not find. One breath after another—little things that drifted to me like the snowflakes, nothings that melted away as they fell, but that had been—taught me that Nee Lay Pin, my sister's *amah* was hiding something. I could not find it. But I was watching, listening for it always. I dared not say of it to my father—at first because I scorned to have punished a foolish serving woman for what was but some silly peasant fault probably. But my suspicion of her greatened. One day I asked you to tell it to me if you saw Nee Lay Pin at any place not in my father's walls—"

"I remember."

"And when you told me you had seen her two times—speaking with Nipponese dwarfs—then in the city in speech with a German, I knew that she sinned, not in just foolishness. And that night I would have told it to Yo Wing So, but he had ridden far, and lay not with his home that night. The next day— We must go. We must not wait more long from it. My sister is with Osuro the dwarf—in his house. Our flower-one she has been prisoned, made to not understand. Save us! Come with me now, and save us. Hide our shame; in your white manhood hide our shame! Help me to hide it from Yo Wing So! It would deal him death. But first he would with his own hand slit the life from our flower-one. She has not known what she did. The devil dwarf bewitched her. She is my little sister. You will help me?" Yo Ya-ling had risen to her slim height as she spoke, and she held out her hands, palms up, in exquisite entreaty. Rutherford thought she pleaded for her sister; Walter Swift knew that she was pleading for her family, pleading for the Yos that lived, and pleading for her ancestors—for their honor.

"We will help you!" the Englishman said gravely, and came and laid his hand in promise—and in apology—on her sleeve. "But let me send you, in my rickshaw—my men are faithful, you need not fear to trust them—to my wife, until we bring your sister to you there. It is man's work, Miss Yo; we will do it—trust us."

"It is my work. Above all that live it is Yo work," she answered sadly. "I lead you—I lead until we reach the shrubberies that hedge the dwarf's garden. Then N'zö-ping will lead us. For that I brought him. And the madness would come to me if I stayed from it behind. I go to ask you what to do when we get there. I do not know what—but our Mother of Mercy who let me find you—you all—when I get past the storm to you—she will tell me. Kwan Yin-ko will make me hear it. We cannot go in by the dwarf's gate. It is guarded. Between the hour of the drake and the hour of the silk-worm they plan to go to Nippon, to take my flower-one with them. It may be to-night, or next night, but it is to be at the approach of the hour of the silk-worm or nearer the hour of the drake; and the dwarf Osuro, he hold my little sister now his prisoner. She call us to save her. Give me now N'zö-ping; I keep him fast. Come; at the hour of the *wu kêng* it may be too late. Let us go!"

If it occurred to the Englishman, as he gave back the rat-sized dog into the hand Ya-ling held out for it, that to cumber themselves on such a foray with such a yelping nothing, was the height of folly, he did not say it. And Walter Swift understood why N'zö-ping went with them. The tiny birth-stunted sleeve dogs are the surest of all sleuths, and have enormous intelligence.

They wrapped Ya-ling as warmly as they could. A mackintosh of Burton's, the smallest at the chummery, unearthed feverishly, they wrapped about her below her waist as well as they could when she was mounted. Her horse had waited for her in the downpour where she had left it. Something they put about her shoulders. The cloak she'd come in was impossible, because none of them had thought to hand it through the door to be taken to the cook-house, when Swift had gone for towels, and to order Pilkington's motor-cycle. They protected Ya-ling as well as they could, caught up top-coats—not their own, but what the hall chests yielded—and went with her, Drew on her faithful horse, Lord Rutherford-Carmichael taut and competent on the motor-cycle, Swift clinging, not without peril, to the carrier, and to Rutherford.

But Rutherford had followed Tom Drew for a moment into the next room before they started.

"Have you got a revolver?" Rutherford asked.

"Getting it. And I've one to spare."

"I've mine on me. Don't know why, but I often have. Give Walter the extra one."

"Can he use it?"

"Not too well. He's not bad at a target. And he'll not do his own side damage. I've heard you shoot well."

"Pretty well! Do you?"

"Very," the Englishman answered simply. And as they went back together he said. "I beg your pardon, Drew."

"That's all right," the American told him. "We must be shoulder to shoulder to-night in this. I see how you made the mistake. But I don't see how you,

or any one could; and I wish you hadn't." It still rankled.

"So do I," Rutherford said heartily, almost humbly.

"Well," Drew added, more pleasantly. "I am glad I did not kill you. I meant to, Rutherford."

"I know you did," the other said cordially.

"Well, I'm glad I didn't."

"So am I. I'm damned glad you did not."

They pushed their way through the storm desperately and warily. Several times they had to pick their way almost mincingly—and with craven, nerve-breaking slowness. Yo Ya-ling led the way. She knew it best, and her fine mare obeyed the tiny girl-hands perfectly. Rutherford kept close to heel.

Had it been a mad escapade for a mad bet, the ridiculousness of it would have been enormous. Drew had looked better on the camel. Swift, absurdly perched, not too securely, wobbled badly, and held on frantically. But no one saw them. They could not see each other, for when the lightning came, it blinded them.

And this was not escapade. It was grim and dangerous purpose—human chivalry and rescue. And if they had seen themselves clearly not one of them could have smiled. It never occurred to them afterwards to think how funny they must have looked.

They knew the peril they were in—the three men did. And each felt almost criminal that they had not forced Yo Ya-ling to stay behind them. She had compelled them. Her fierce purpose had lashed them into obedience. But they realized as they went into what peril they were taking her, and winced that they had let her make them do it—were letting her do it. It was no

good to think of that now. They knew that she would go on without them if need be.

They pushed on.

And it was not many *li*.

A stone hurtled down by the storm struck the cycle lamp, and shattered it. It was useless to attempt to relight the unprotected light. Rutherford went on without it—following the mare's heels as carefully as a fine orchestra follows its leader's baton.

No one spoke. Had they, no one could have heard. Much of the time Rutherford-Carmichael had to guess at the mare's hoof-falls—keep their persistent rhythm in his head, catch it when he could, follow as best he might. He scarcely heard his own cycle—a noisy enough specimen of a noisy breed. Neither Ya-ling nor Drew could hear it at all.

As they came near to Osuro's—they had had to lose a little time in avoiding going nearer to Yo's wall than Ya-ling dared—the storm gave way almost entirely, and far more suddenly than it had come. A star showed, as they paused in a scrub-oak thicket, another and another glimmered damply as Drew dropped to the ground, and Swift scrambled off the machine stiffly.

"Ya-ling," Tom Drew pleaded, "wait for us here. We will find her; we will bring her to you."

For answer Yo Ya-ling took his hand, and led him on through a thin belt of sickly moonlight. He went with her, and said no more. The others followed closely.

The mare stood quietly where Yo Ya-ling had dismounted, and began munching oak-leaves contentedly. When her mistress came back, she'd be ready. If her mistress whistled, she'd go to her quickly. Until her mistress wanted her she would wait patiently. She was

not tired. But the oak-leaves were toothsome—and an unaccustomed treat.

Signal lights were showing—a green flash on a hilltop answered a red rocket that shot up silently not far on the other side of Osuro's house. All four saw the signals but they did not speak.

When they reached a hedge of heavily-leafed bushes, Yo Ya-ling slipped her hand from Drew's, pressing it watchfully against the bushes as she led the way close to them, away from Osuro's gate. Her other hand was close on N'zö-ping, muzzling him to silence.

"Now! I have found the gap. We must give no sound. The house lights do not show. I do not know which room they are in—but N'zö-ping will show us."

Yo Ya-ling held the tiny sleeve-dog close to her face, soothed it and spoke to it in Chinese. Neither Drew nor Lord Rutherford-Carmichael understood what she said to it. Swift did—perhaps because he had expected her to say what she had—and he had lived in China nearly seventeen years.

Yo Ya-ling had told N'zö-ping that Yo Su was in danger; they were there to rescue her; N'zö-ping must find Yo Su, and without a sound; no matter what happened N'zö-ping must not bark or yap or Yo Su would be punished for it.

The tiny creature looked up at Yo Ya-ling with gleaming eyes still as a pointing spaniel, but its nostrils quivered hungrily.

Yo Ya-ling set it down gently—still holding firmly one end of its long soft cord.

N'zö-ping hesitated, sniffed about in a circle slowly, waited, stiffened—almost in a rigor—nosed the ground again, and was off. The little creature made no more

noise than apple-blossom petals drifting down in summer.

Yo Ya-ling knew that N'zö-ping was on the scent—the human scent of Yo Su—and Swift knew it. The other two suspected it.

Softly as N'zö-ping went, Yo Ya-ling followed, and Drew at her side and the others almost as close, cocked their revolvers. Yo Ya-ling saw and smiled at them. And they gritted their teeth, knowing that Yo Ya-ling might not smile again.

The signal lights were flashed again. Three blue lights answered a red and an orange.

As they neared the house, Yo Ya-ling shortened N'zö-ping's tether and kept closer to the sleeve-dog.

It led them nearly halfway around the house, stopped, lifted a paw, almost in human speech, toward a close-drawn shutter. Yo Ya-ling snatched it up to her, softly. They pressed, noiselessly to the shutter.

A violet light answered a white light. A ruby signaled back to a ruby.

"But you promised me, Toru!"

Yo Ya-ling pressed the tiny dog head against her bosom closely.

Osuro's answer they did not catch—but they heard its tone. He hissed it softly, mockingly.

Yo Su was sobbing wildly.

But still they waited.

N'zö-ping, obedient still to the Yo fingers that held him, made no sound, but the little creature's trembling was pitiful. Yo Ya-ling was motionless as stone. Drew, closest at her side, more intensely anxious for Ya-ling than for the girl so perilled in that hidden room, could not hear her breathing. And still Yo Ya-ling did not

give the signal-word for which the three men with her waited, scarcely able to wait longer. Still Yo Ya-ling listened, her ear against the shutter, her hand sharp on Yo Su's shaking sleeve-dog.

CHAPTER XXVIII

YO SU had failed him. The last papers—or, failing them, copies of them—vitally important to Osuro, so important that without them all she already had brought him was incomplete and nearly worthless, were not in her jacket as she slipped through the peach trees and bamboos that sheltered her nearest to his door; and she knew that he had depended upon her to have them when she came to him to-night. But he loved her, trusted and loved her entirely, and she had crept through the hedge happily, confident in his welcome; had come fearlessly to tell him that Yo Wing So and the others met somewhere else now—if they met at all—perhaps in Shensi, where Yo had gone from Hunan, and where Yo Wing So still tarried. Her father's room was barred and guarded. She could find no way into it to search for what Osuro had charged her bring—if Yo Wing So had left it there. She was sorry; but what did it matter? Little; for when they were married and Osuro's messenger came from fair Nippon, Yo Wing So, reading the honorable words Toru Osuro and his wife Su Yo Osuro had sent—meekly, but very beautifully written—why then Yo Wing So would forgive them; for the great augurs of Osuro's people had assured it. And when their honorable father had learned the celestial plan that Toru had planned and that the gods had

promised to fulfil, her lord Toru Osuro's flower-decked jade-and-purest-gold plan for the friendship of China and Nippon—that they might be as one forever and rule the World, Earth's undisputed master—why then the honorable father would send for them and bless them, and he would pile his fragrant gratitude up before her lord husband higher than Omi, more fragrant than the flowers of green orchids in the Vale of Sunlight; and he would give Osuro her lord the scroll she had not been able to bring to-night. "And, oh, my Toru, thy Su will like it more, that the venerable Yo Wing So gives than that she, even because of her devotion to his welfare as to thine own wish, did steal it. It has pained her to take from her noble father, she who has obeyed you in all things because her lord is a clear-as-Heaven Great Man."

Yo Su looked up as she ended—she had been toying with his girdle as she babbled—looked up for the caress she longed for, looked up to see the praise and worship that always smiled to her in Osuro's eyes.

Osuro had not listened to her, after he had understood that he was balked completely—at least for now. His ears caught the silly clatter of her words, but his mind was planning what to do. Shantung would not keep him in safety to-morrow if but a whisper crept through. He must get to Nippon—leave all he'd begun and so nearly finished, undone—spoiled. What would his home welcome be—if he could get there before the rocks of China's mountains hurled down and crushed him! He had boasted what he would do and get in Shantung. What had he? He had promised to crush Yo Wing So, the arrogant sash-wearer and dreamer, had promised to get Shantung's richest gold-mine—Nippon needed gold, how badly only the gods of Japan

and her harried bankers knew—had boasted and pledged that he would rip the wealth of the Benevolent Crane from its mother-bowels of Shantung, and pour that land-sea of almost inexhaustible gold into gaping coffers at Tokio—or destroy the Crane, make it an irredeemable shambles of dust and ruined machinery, and Chinese toil wasted, thwarted and mocked. His own Imperial Government had not countenanced or applauded his scheme. He doubted if Japan's Greatest would not have forbidden it even, had the Great One known of it. But success crowns all. And what he had gained for himself, and for those whose purse-pouches had made his slow, careful, costly pursuit of it possible, enriching themselves, could but have enriched Japan, since the wealth and profit of her loyal sons were doubly hers. What crowned failure? Osuro knew. Could this failure be retrieved? He had spent enormously here; tarried to perfect, bribed and spent, covered his very tracks, his every foot-print with his own impoverished country's scanty gold—hers, because that of her loyal Nipponese, his richer countrymen who had filled and refilled his money chests. He had been so sure. Each preliminary failure had but whetted his cocksureness. For failure had dogged him—he saw it now. Again and again a bribe had been wasted. A fuse securely sunk in Yo's richest lode had missed fire, or been pulled out by Chinese hands. The girl had been his trump card and he had played her too soon, too hastily, throwing away the patience and preparation of years. Already Gomutzu waited at Yo's gate to fling over Yo's wall at Yo's feet the message of Yo Su's peril. Yo Wing So must have swallowed that bait and for his great shame's sake have followed it alone, uncompanioned. Already

the decoy girl waited, so like Yo Su in Yo Su's garments —seen at a distance—that Yo must have given his chop in exchange for her. But Yo was in Shensi. Into whose hands might not that message thrown over the wall into Yo's garden fall, if Gomutzu blundered? And, if by chance Yo came back at daybreak, found the missive, kept the tryst, it would avail nothing but disaster piled on disaster. For the deed that would bind the title of the Benevolent Crane was not ready, could not be made ready without a full and accurate knowledge of that one last, indispensable document that the girl had not brought. Fool, to have made so sure! But he had—and with great reason. A red lady-bird had climbed up the spray of azaleas on his study desk at sunrise. A red butterfly, the rarest in Asia—the ruby gossamer that breeds only on the crystal-tree grave-mound—had flown in at his chamber window as he robed. And it was past butterfly time now; the coming cold was crisping the air already. Moreover, he had dreamed of his mother, his lovely, smiling mother last night, had dreamed of her with cherry blossoms in her hair, and she had held out a *saki*-cup to him with love brimming in her dear, tender eyes. . . . And the grave of K'ung-tszze still stood. What misadventure had safe-guarded it? *That* would have made Shantung impotent, convinced China that her sun forever had set!

Toru Osuro's eyes filled with tears. His heart bled—for Nippon. Nippon holy and beautiful.

What welcome would Nippon have, his worshiped Nippon, for the son who had failed? What welcome his mother? Father? The blossoms on the trees would mock him, the gods of Shinto would despise and brand him.

Yo Su looked up, flushed and smiling—and her smile froze into an instant horror.

Osuro's livid face was a death-mask.

Yo Su's hands fell from his girdle—except for that she could not move. She dared not speak.

Presently the "dead" eyes saw her—remembered her. The Japanese shoulders met the man's lean cheeks as he bent down towards the frightened, flower-face of the little Chinese girl standing paralyzed before him. The death-mask broke up, writhed and twisted hideously, and as the madman hissed at Yo Su one foul word, he clenched his fist and struck her—just as Yo Ya-ling had carried N'zö-ping through the hedge gap.

Yo Su did not flinch. She never had had a blow before. Yo Z'in Tö's stick barely had grazed her garments once or twice in the happy days before Yo Ki had gone On High. No one minded the venerable Yo Z'in Tö's stick; its taste was honorable. But to be struck by the knotted fist of a man! The demented blow had hurt and bruised her badly—the little Chinese flower-faced—but Yo Su did not know that it had. But she knew that a man had murdered her love. Her dream was done. And she knew that she was soiled.

She stood where she was, motionless.

Osuro hurled his rage and his seering hate at her, lashed and tore her with their merciless thongs.

It was not what Osuro said—but that he said it—that tortured Yo Su. And few of his tumbled, frenzied words reached her at all. But she heard and understood his voice. She saw and read his face—the face of a fiend. But what she did not read was his suffering, the intense sorrow of which his rage was but the upchurned froth and swirling slime. Toru Osuro was

suffering for Japan. Every Asian is a child in much. Their tender love of nature—flowers and birds and running water—keeps them children, and, even the worst of them and those that life has most brutalized, something pure of heart. The gibbering demon—for he was that—taunting and flaunting her there, was a man in torture, and a disappointed, heart-hurt child. There was no excuse for him, perhaps, but there is explanation. And this—in the apex of his tortured vortex; it was all for Japan. Patriotism gone drunk, become fiendish; but patriotism.

Toru Osuro believed that his country's salvation, his countrymen's future must come from the enormous wealth of China—if they came. He did not believe that Japan was fit to "take on" Europe—a united Europe—yet, and he made no mistake that sooner or later all Europe that counted would unite to crush or throttle an Asian foe. That Japan was, or for countless generations could be, under any circumstances a serious menace to the United States—with the great Republic's enormous sea-coast, and stupendous wealth, the richest nation on Earth to-day, and, perhaps, the most powerful—he did not for an instant believe.

For Japan, then, it was China or nothing—China refuge, exchequer and safety-valve.

He had come to China to serve Japan; China had beaten him down, broken him; he had failed. And Yo Su as she stood there was China to him. If words could kill!—Words can sometimes; kill love and self respect.

Her disillusion, instant, complete, was enough undecked. But what Yo Su was suffering was doubled, at least, because when she had come to him here, more than an hour ago, before the rain had come, Osuro had

greeted her with a sweeter tenderness than she had tasted before in all their hours of stolen love. And now!

He had been so sure that what she had promised to bring, she had brought—for surely the lady-bird, K'ung-tszze's own butterfly, and the *saki*-cup his mother held, could not lie—that he had not asked her of it at first. She had it, he knew. It was his at last. In his triumph's flush and glow, even he felt some tenderness for the Chinese girl. They had laughed at it together when the storm had come. It would pass, and they were together. She was in his arms, when the storm broke into wildness and cannon sounds. Osuro gathered her closer. Yo Su was content.

And now!

His rage turned to ice. Slowly and coldly he told her the truth. Yo Su was listening now—listening and learning what she had done—she a Yo! Only one thing Osuro kept back. He did not let her suspect that he had failed or was balked. He had sent Yo Wing So word. Yo had returned from Shensi, had entered the great gate as she had slipped through the north. Yo Wing So would be here—to see where his daughter was—and how.

And then her Chinese spirit quailed, her courage broke, and she threw herself at Toru Osuro's feet.

"But you promised me, Toru."

Osuro laughed—then flicked at the poor crouching child with hot, cruel words, and the sluice-gate of his anger lifted again; he lashed her hard and long with his hideous speech—till Yo Su's eyes were glazed with fear.

"Not that! Not that!" Yo Su whimpered, grovel-

ing at his feet. "Kill me, Osuro, before he comes. Kill me, Osuro, before my father comes!"

Yo Ya-ling's hold loosened a little on the sleeve-dog's straining head.

"No," Osuro replied with a laugh, "when I am through with you, I may do that—or toss you to another; as my mood may be. But you may not die now, daughter of Yo Wing So. You go with me to Tokio, my Chinese concubine!"

"Now," Ya-ling told them.

Rutherford-Carmichael wrenched the light shutter away with an oath, and a hand that was sprained for weeks; Swift gave what help he could. Drew fired.

He fired low. Yo Su had struggled up at the sound of the snapping shutter, and Osuro had caught her by her arm and pulled her to him as she did. Drew did not dare aim high and to kill as he had meant to do; Yo Su was in the line. He aimed at Osuro's ankle, and shot through its bone.

Osuro did not fall, but his foot-hold slipped and he staggered a little. He let go his hold of Yo Su, and she fell, mercifully unconscious as she crumpled down on the floor.

They were all in the room now, and almost before Yo Su had heaped down at Osuro's feet, Yo Ya-ling had gathered Su into her arms and dragged her gently away, and N'zö-ping had cuddled down with a whimpering cry into the sleeve that was his, soft and warm—Ya-ling had kept him dry—against her arm he loved.

Osuro knew that the end had come and he smiled. He'd have a life for his, if he could, before he died or was roped. His revolver was locked away too far for

him to reach; the English lord and the older American had him covered, and the fair-haired man was aiming again—higher this time. He must tear a life away with his hands, if he could dodge the next shot, and limp quickly enough to one of his foes.

This was not the end. But the end was near.

As Drew's shot spit out, the inner *sogi* was ripped back. K'ung Kuo-fan stood there with his hand on a great hound's collar.

K'ung's face was expressionless as a parchment mask. Friend or foe, his face told him neither. And only Ta Gong, the hound, knew that the hand on his neck had quivered.

K'ung Kuo-fan had come to kill—to kill when he had found and taken or destroyed what he knew had leaked from Yo's study to Toru Osuro's. He owed more than one life to a German bomb, and he had known that a girl of his people was held here in peril and shame, but he had not known her name or caste or family. He saw Yo Su's face as she fell—he had not heard her voice, for he had made his way to the *sogi* but now—but his face had not changed nor his cold eyes faltered. Only his hand had quivered against Ta Gong's collar.

Osuro heard the *sogi* pushed back, looked toward it, and knew what the end was to be. But he gave no sign that he cared. Osuro shrugged slightly, and the three Western men saw it, and paid it the throb of respect that manhood must. Walter Swift's clear cameo-face flushed faintly. He pitied Toru Osuro.

"Now." K'ung spoke in Chinese the one word that Yo Ya-ling had spoken in English out there beyond the closed shutter. Again the word was enough. Ta Gong's

eyes were fire as he sprang, and his big, brute jaws dribbled saliva.

Osuro did not turn, but he laughed softly, then leaned over the table and pushed to its far edge—as far out of the rushing danger as he could—the slender vase of Japanese azaleas. His eyes stayed on them tenderly, on the delicate rosy azaleas that his mother had sent to him from her garden in their home at Nikko—as the great hound's fangs met in his throat.

They heard the great teeth clinch as the great jaws snapped—they saw Osuro's face. He made no sound—scarcely struggled; they saw the red thicken on the hound's gnawing mouth, and drip—they sickened, and looked away.

CHAPTER XXIX

TOM DREW was terribly tired. He had lived in more tension than he had at all realized—he had not suspected it even—here in Shantung. Its heat had not beat him—heat scarcely can do that to a New York man who is strong and young and vigorously well. And he had liked the stinging cold of his Shantung winter. A "six-coat cold day" was nothing to him—had only tingled his blood like champagne. But a personal strain that never had reached his conscious mind till self had leaped and flamed with his cry to Rutherford-Carmichael —"I'll kill you for that!"—had reached his nerves and pommelled his nerve-meshed flesh; a strain that was test of character and grip of sex. His race across the hillocky countryside with a bomb ticking annihilation

in his arms, might have tired any man. What Rutherford had said—the flood-gate his friend's words had wrenched open wide, and the personal plight, perhaps Ya-ling's plight too—had hit him hard, jolted his very axis of being; for he had known instantly how grave a thing was that plight of his—perhaps too of hers; how far it would reach, how deep it would cut and scar, how long and sharp it would persist; he had not, even in his first half-dazed amazement, minimized its gravity, or underestimated its tangle and hard demand. It had strained and wearied him exquisitely. Then, with that new wound still raw, running red and throbbing in agony, he had seen Ya-ling standing wet and distressed in his doorway; what she had told, what she had asked—the rush through the storm—the suspense at the Japanese shuttered window—the sordid, noisome tragedy of Osuro's mangled death—the hurried, stealthy taking of Yo Su to Aline—the hour or two that had followed—small shame to any man that he was tired!

He scarcely knew yet just what all it was about, what it all meant, and still less how it had come about. And he did not greatly care.

He had raised his revolver again as the hound had dashed the Japanese down—it had been too much to stand and watch a dog kill and mangle an unarmed man, a man he already had wounded, even a man who had done what Toru Osuro had. But Rutherford had touched his arm, and said, "It is over, Tom; no need to shoot—no use to. We must get these girls away from this. There's still work cut out for us to-night—stiffish work. Don't waste a cartridge. We may need them all. A dozen Japanese may be waiting for us now in the garden, at the gate, at the gap we came through."

And Walter Swift had come to him too—and said in a low voice, "For God's sake, yes—we must get the ladies away—as far and as fast as we can."

Then K'ung had called the hound off—it had obeyed the master's voice instantly—and K'ung had come to them across the room, and had said gravely, "We must go—now. We can go through the gate—the gate-man there will not wake, and he is the only living Japanese here now. But others may come—back from false trails they may have been tricked to take; passers-by—there may be some even at this hour—may stop and watch, and see us go. Let us go quickly. I know the way—at least the way to start—and as we go we must council where most for their comfort it will be that we take the honorable daughters of our friend Yo Wing So. It would be ill to disturb the household of Yo Wing So at this hour."

That needed no urging.

"We will carry the ladies to my wife," the Englishman said decidedly. "She will care for Miss Yo and her sister. But how are we to get them there? That's the rub."

"Thank you," K'ung said quickly. "It solves the only embarrassment. I have conveyance at the gate, a palanquin that will carry two, and my chairmen, though I trust them, shall not see—they might misunderstand—whom they carry." He went to Yo Ya-ling, and bent down and spoke to her, where she sat huddled on the floor with Su's head on her breast.

"That will be best," Ya-ling replied.

Lord Rutherford-Carmichael bent and picked up unconscious Yo Su. N'zö-ping whimpered as he did so, but Ya-ling bade him be still, and the tiny creature

wriggled farther up Su's arm and did not whimper again.

K'ung led the way, Rutherford close behind him, Yo Ya-ling between Tom Drew and Walter Swift, and the great hound trotted behind them sedately.

Turning off towards the Englishman's bungalow, gardened at the very edge of K'üfu, Drew looked across his shoulder towards the place they had left a few minutes before. Osuro's house was in flames—burning so furiously that before they reached the sacred city nothing of it, nothing in it, would remain but a heap of ashes. Drew shuddered. Were any of Osuro's servants there? At that fear, he looked away, and K'ung Kuo-fan turned and looked at Drew, and smiled.

When they saw his bungalow in the distance, Rutherford-Carmichael pushed on rapidly before them; and when they reached it, Aline, with some soft crêpe thing over her nightgown, and all her sunny hair tumbled loose about her, was waiting for them. And when the chairmen had gone, it was Aline who drew back the palanquin curtains, and held out her hand to Yo Ya-ling.

Drew, from the first moment he saw her, always had liked Aline Rutherford-Carmichael. Now his liking deepened fiercely. He was proud to be her countryman.

She asked no questions and Rutherford had not had time to tell her much. She took charge of them all on the instant. Drew had not seen great Generals do it better or more quietly. It was Aline Rutherford-Carmichael who gathered little Su into her arms, Ya-ling into her sympathy; and it was Aline who carried the still unconscious Chinese child off to the bed from which Giggles had so unexpectedly roused her.

"Go into the dining-room, you men, until I want you. Giggles, take Mr. K'ung into the dining-room,"—she had met K'ung Kuo-fan only once—"and be quiet all of you. Eat something, if you can find it. Come, dear." She had no hand to spare Yo Ya-ling, the little unconscious figure took both her strong, young arms to hold it, but her voice and her glance took Ya-ling by the hand and gathered her close, and Yo Ya-ling, who had disliked England most of all because there other girls sometimes had touched her, slipped her hand into Lady Rutherford-Carmichael's arm and clung to it gently, and went with Aline gratefully and confidently.

Never again would K'ung Kuo-fan speak ill, see ill, hear ill of fair-haired, laughing Western women.

Rutherford-Carmichael led the way to the dining-room. When he had pushed back the blinds with his left hand, for sunrise was crinkling brightly now, and given K'ung a chair, he went to the sideboard.

"Whiskey is indicated," he remarked as he took up the decanter. And no one contradicted him.

Not since he had been in Europe had this descendant of Confucius entered a Western's house, or accepted a Western's hospitality—except occasionally, of late, Tom Drew's. But K'ung Kuo-fan had no wish to go from this Englishman's bungalow. Courteously, but almost without protestation, he accepted the seat Rutherford-Carmichael offered, and sat watching the door, sipping too a little of the "peg" his host had brought him. The others drank theirs less deliberately. It had been a tiring night. Lord Rutherford had not exaggerated when he'd said that a stimulant was indicated.

The great hound had not come into the house but, at a word of K'ung's had lain down quietly beside the

empty sedan chair, in the tiny walled courtyard that stood between the street wall and the bungalow's front door.

Drew could not forget that hound. And, unable to hide it longer, he turned to K'ung when Rutherford busied himself again at the sideboard.

"Is it safe?" he asked. "Not even tied—if anything could hold him? The dog?"

"Ta Gong would not harm a new rabbit if it nipped his nose," K'ung Kuo-fan assured him, "—unless I bade him. If I bid him, nothing lives that he will not attack."

Tom believed it—and he shuddered again.

Lady Rutherford-Carmichael came to them before long.

"She is very ill," she told them, "conscious now, but wandering. But we must manage without a doctor, take care of her alone—Miss Yo and I, if we can possibly. Walter, go to the Yos for me—go now—before Mrs. Yo misses her daughters—if she has not already. Tell the gate-keeper—the keeper of the great gate, Miss Yo says, remember—that I am ill, and long to keep Ya-ling and Su with me for a few days; that it will comfort me greatly, and that when they came here yesterday afternoon I begged them to stay with me, and that Giggles sent you *then* to ask the favor of their mother. Explain in some way why you neglected to do it then and there as you promised to. Think out the excuse while you are going—make up as good a one as you can—say you were taken ill yourself, sent a servant in your place, and have only just learned that the stupid—a new servant—went to the wrong estate. Say he takes the 'black smoke'—say anything—the best you can

manufacture as you go. Miss Yo and her sister have been with me since tea-time yesterday—that is the important part—and that it is entirely your fault that my message was not delivered promptly."

"That's a *nice* errand," her husband exclaimed. "I'd better go—and explain—if I can—not put it on Walter."

"You might bungle it. Tom would be sure to—no, it's up to Walter, I'm afraid. Thank God, Mr. Yo is still in Shensi! The grandmother keeps in her own room a great deal now, Ya-ling says—and often keeps one of the girls with her, sometimes both. Mrs. Yo may have taken it for granted that they were with her at evening-rice, and that she kept them—she does sometimes—to talk or sing to her when she does not sleep. And Mrs. Yo will not have gone to the old lady's room to make good-night obeisance unless Madame Yo sent for her—that is Madame Yo's rule, thank goodness. We may keep it all quiet—if the servants have not chattered—keep it from the parents, I mean. We must keep it quiet. If there has been a hue and cry—a runner sent to Yo Wing So already, you must see Mrs. Yo, take all the blame, and apologize abjectly. Go now, Walter."

"It will bring Mrs. Yo here, won't it?" Drew asked, as Swift went.

"We hope not! Ya-ling will go home the moment we dare have Su left alone with me. If the mother should come, we must manage somehow, Miss Yo and I. Mr. K'ung, you are Mr. Yo's close friend. Will you feel obliged to tell him—anything?"

"I do not so see my friendship," the Chinese answered. "As Kwan Yin-ko is merciful, I will speak no word to

wound my friend Yo Wing So—nor any of his clan. Will you tell Yo Ya-ling that I have said it? And''—he had spoken to Aline, now he spoke to the others too—''I cannot tell what I do not know. I know nothing. Before your servants stir—they will come soon now—I go, and I take the chair with me.''

''Thank you!'' Aline said earnestly. And at that K'ung Kuo-fan smiled oddly.

''Go home, Tom,'' the woman ordered. ''Giggles, be smoking on the verandah. The servants *will* be about in a few minutes now. Go out there now. I'll phone you when I can, Tom. Don't phone me until I do.'' That was all she said to Drew—but to K'ung Kuo-fan she held out her hand. He took it instantly, and held it while he said, looking frankly at Aline, ''Will she live?''

''Everything is possible to youth,'' Aline answered. ''She is very young. And we will do our best, Ya-ling and I.''

K'ung bowed, as he released her hand without speaking, but the women knew that his eyes had thanked her.

Rutherford had closed the gate behind them when K'ung and Drew had carried the sedan chair through it.

Halfway to the chummery they hid it, hid it and left it to rot in a deep bamboo thicket, to be soaked there first in the storm winds and the blankets of snow that were coming to Shantung before many moons. The leaves on the tallow-trees were turning red now; and a crisp chill tingled in the sunrise that was painting the temples and shrines on hill slope and pathside, turning the old gray walls of Confucius' City to russet and bronze; it would be a two-coat cold day next moon; and

already the "babies" were storing twigs and manure for their *k'angs*, and counting the weeks till the Pepper Month came when

> "Shorn by the frost with crystal blade
> The dry leaves scattered fall at last";

and when debts must be paid before joy came in with the new year and the Lantern's Feast.

Only once before they parted, not far from Drew's door, as morning broke in all its Chinese glory upon the province of Shantung, did they speak.

"I wish I had known that you were watching that Japanese," Tom said; "If we had known that we were in it together, and had acted sooner, we might have avoided the worst of it. One thing bothers me. I keep thinking about it. I wonder, if you'd mind my asking you?"

"I shall not mind," K'ung Kuo-fan replied.

"Where were Osuro's servants? He must have had some—in a place like that. That fire was mighty sudden. Were any of them—burned?"

"Osuro was alone there. We had decoyed all the others away. I did not go there to kill servants—unless I had to. I went to get papers that I knew he had. I did not know how he had got them. But I knew that in some way he was draining us of plans and information, very important to us, that no Nipponese should have. That was all I knew, except that he was taking what he had filched to Nippon in a few hours—all I knew until it was time for me to go for them, shake them out of his throat, if necessary, if I was to get them at all. Then I learned that a girl of my people was with the dwarf—in his clutch. I had no suspicion who she was

until I saw. When I saw, I gave the word to Ta Gong. I had the chair at the gate for an unknown woman of our race—to carry her to safety. Where I had arranged for a stranger's shelter, I could not take the kinswoman of a friend, a noble. Your English friend, and his offer, was god-sent. I did intend to kill Osuro the dwarf, but I did not intend to kill him by the dog until I saw whom he had dared to imprison. But I had with me what would drive him from Shantung forever, and I had clansmen whom I could trust as myself, waiting in the shrubberies; and they were armed with petrol. Petrol for Petrol! Burnt carpets show no footsteps. I knew that the dwarf was sending a decoy letter to Yo Wing So, to imprison and torture him until he signed what Osuro needed, I believed. I did not know—the rest. But Yo Wing So never will read that letter. I shall not. I go now to burn it before my ancestors. For the rest, I did not know, I do not understand. But this I know—the pearl-one of my friend Yo Wing So had torn no red flower, broken no fragrant lily. What that pearl-one did—why—I do not understand. But I know that her radiance is as it was—that she has done no wrong thing."

"Oh," Tom said quickly, "quite!" Then, "What I cannot understand is how you pieced it out, got it all bit by bit—about the papers—his meaning to go—all that—and got there just—just when you did; worked it all."

"Chinese," K'ung Kuo-fan answered gravely, "have eyes, and we have ears—and China has her gods."

Too weary, too overwrought to rest, almost too weary to let Hing rid him of coat and shoes, almost too weary

to take the warm bath his flesh ached for, he had half slept in his tub, and when Hing had shut the daylight out securely, Drew had almost slept the clock round. And Hing had seen that no one had disturbed his master.

But now Drew had slept his sleep out, and now he had to face *it:* it was up to him to face it. And Powers Drew's son would not put it off—the determined, unqualified facing of self that possibly is the hardest, and certainly the most tremendous, and, if squarely done, the most momentous of all the hard things that every human soul has to face, and that no strong soul—at least no man's—may skulk from or evade ever.

What was he going to do about it?

He loved a Chinese girl and he was all but thirty.

It was no passing calf-love that had found him out, callow and ready for slight infection; he was not callow. His fancy had not lightly turned to love. He had "fancied" several nice girls, in a nice way—somewhat placidly—at home. This was something else. This was not fancy. This was thunderclap, volcanic storm. This was *need*—longing as tender and convinced as urgent. Sex leapt as a child in its mother, as passionate as manhood at its flood-tide, as tender, cherishing as motherhood. This was love. Would he marry Ya-ling—if she would allow it? Would love be enough? He *felt* that it would, but he *knew* that it would not. Could he go? Did he wish to press on with it? Was he strong enough to go from it? Could he endure to stay here with her in China? Self-exiled in a place that was as alien to him, as he to it! China did not pull him—never would. In Tsi-nan he scarcely had troubled to stroll to the edge of the Hwang-ho; neither its picture nor its story had meant anything to him. To him the Yellow River was

not a patch on the Hudson—no; nor to the East River. "Better fifty years in Europe than a cycle in Cathay"—Browning or Swinburne said—God, yes! Better fifty minutes on Broadway than any space of time in Shantung, title deeds included. He did know a *pai-fang* from a pagoda now, and he didn't give ten cents for either of them. He had liked Tsi-nan well enough, but he had liked it in spite of it's being a Chinese city. He had liked Tsi-nan Fu, had enjoyed himself there, without *seeing* Tsi-nan or the lovely, molten panoramas that belted it. The monasteries in the valleys, cloisters on the hillsides, temples on far hill-tops were just "buildings" as were the tiled homes and open-front shops packed together in the city. He walked on the walls—when he did—to stretch his legs and fill his lungs, not to look over them at the capital within or the teeming country without. Neither the soul of Tsi-nan Fu nor its civic machineries interested him in the least. He never cared to ask, "Why?" or to know, when he learned that the city's north water-door could only be opened at official order, though the west one was free to all. He lived in Tsi-nan Fu for months without asking who the American Consul was, whether that international official spent all his time shooting snipe, or was one of the many sudden creations of Lady Giggles' inspired tongue. He saw the exquisite Temple of the Fire Goddess every day for a month, and never asked what it was or gave it a serious glance. K'üfu he had disliked from the first, and he avoided it as far as he could. He had not troubled to enter the K'ung Temple, and had listened to her voice far more than to what she said when Ya-ling had told him of its sacred treasures, and of the holy leviathan dragons,

scaled in many colors and gem-eyed, that curled and writhed about the Great Hall's countless pillars. Nothing Chinese in K'üfu had attracted him except the Punch and Judy shows. They had tickled him every time he saw them. And he had bought a score of their elfish-impish figures from the street-stalls, and sent them carefully packed to his father. No; he could not live in China, that was flat; not if they gave it to him and made him president—a real, downright useful, potent president with ten terms guaranteed, not a gas-bag one, in one day, out the next, and not much ice-cut either way.

No; he could not live his life out in any part of China —nor spend long stretches of it here.

Could he live anywhere—with a Chinese wife? Brand her? Brand his own manhood? Brand the flesh of his unborn children! Did Ya-ling care? If she did, she had given no sign, he thought. But could he read the signs Chinese girls gave?—if they ever did. Ya-ling had given him no sign but—yes, he believed she cared. She had not pulled away from his comradeship. In her trouble she had leaned against him, literally.

Would she have leaned so on K'ung Kuo-fan, or on Walter Swift whom her father loved? He thought not. She had obeyed him in the garden of Confucius. Had it been the obedience of Yo Ki's sister—or woman's obedience to her man? Not, he felt, altogether the obedience of Ki's sister. "Yan-Kee Dude-Lee"—it had throbbed as she pulled it up from her table-lute. And, more than once, Ya-ling had urged him to go home. That seemed to him—as he sensed her—most significant of all; the one convincingly telltale thing she had given; her confession.

He believed that Yo Ya-ling cared.

Would she marry him—if he asked it—and live in China with a foreign husband, a Western? No—not if he understood Yo Ya-ling. But you never could tell, though. And only Yo Ya-ling could answer that.

Would she leave her country and her people, the things she knew, and that were her very being, and go with him? He believed that that was more likely.

Did he wish to take her? New York and his Chinese wife? The man's teeth shut on his lip. But how he longed for the touch of Yo Ya-ling. And her sweetness! Women at home—all of them—would seem pallid to him now, and a little sharp and strident, even the gentlest and brightest. And he thought they would always. How would his people take it? Not so much, what they'd do about it—but what would they feel about it?

Molly—oh, Molly could go hang. He'd hate to hear her laugh, to know she jeered, but he had as little intention of marrying, or refraining from any marriage he chose, to please Molly, as he expected Molly to for him.

Mother? No—she would not forgive it. Tom Drew knew that—as sons know who have been best loved, closest. All his life Mother had been soft and yielding to him. He scarcely could recall anything that she had once denied him. Nothing since he'd been too old to ask her for the moon to play with. His way had been her way, his wish her wish. She never had understood a word of his base-ball jargon, and not half his Harvard tellings and confidences, but always her eyes had leapt to it—to every word of it. And she had loved to hear, because he had liked to tell. Even in her girlhood

Mother could not have been athletic. She never had had a tennis racquet in her hand—she was "funny" at croquet—but not often! She never had ridden horse or bicycle. Even her carriage horses always were phlegmatic—showy, but slow; she had insisted on it. He doubted if, when Mother had been a little girl, she had ever thrown a bean-bag, skipped rope or rolled a hoop. But the glorious times he had—they had been glorious—at polo and ball games—had given Mother more joy than they had him. . . . But, in this she would not yield to him. Ya-ling would cost him his mother. *And how he loved her*—Mother! She would hate Ya-ling, and rend her. She would neither forgive nor compromise. He knew his mother. Well—it had happened before; it happened often. A man must go his road.

A photograph very like her—the only photograph here in his bedroom—his mother—was on the dressing-table. It faced him, and he was looking at it very tenderly, but it was an older, more rugged face that he saw clearer—his father! No; his father would not turn on him. Father never would do that. Father would suffer, like fury, and his shame would be a torment—but his father would suffer, and forgive.

Molly could lump or like it though he was very fond of Molly. A man could not cut his life out of his mother's apron strings—a man should not. But could he do this thing to his father, shame him on Wall Street, shame him in the old New England village to which he rarely went (at Thanksgiving when he could, and sometimes to a funeral)? Could he shame his father, shame him of his own fatherhood, shame him in his grandchildren?

No, he could not strike his father—such a father! It was his mother whom he had more dearly loved; it was now. But he could not hurt his father. His father's friendship had been too great, too staunch, too sweet and too unfailing. A thump on the back was the nearest caress or show of sentiment that his father had given him since he could remember. But what a friend! "Ancestral friendship—great family-friendship," Ya-ling had said! Yes, he believed that was it, and he believed that nothing else was better, stronger; perhaps nothing else quite so sacred.

Odd—a gray-haired man in Wall Street, frowning in grim satisfaction at an open ledger, had brought Tom Drew closer to China than Swift, K'ung Kuo-fan or China had—far closer than had Yo Ya-ling.

It was as a girl that she had appealed to him—not as a Chinese. Again and again he had forgotten that she was Chinese. To him she was just Ya-ling; and it was not for his American mind to realize that her Chineseness was she, the very essence even, as it was the cause, of her personality and of her individuality—an individuality, vital and clear-cut, that was but little akin to individuality as his trans-Pacific mind understood it.

Whether Yo Ya-ling would join with him on one road—if he asked it—or not, he did not know. But he would not ask it. He did not wish it. He would not do that thing to his father. That clinched it. And still less would he do it to his own life; he knew that. Tom Drew was honest even to himself.

He rolled over, and burrowed his face in his pillows—not in struggle—that was over and his decision made—but in sheer misery. It hurt.

Indeed he had had no decision to make; ancestry, in-

stinct and his own character had made it for him from his birth and long before.

But it hurt.

Would it hurt Ya-ling?

He should tell her, he told himself, as he turned over again and rang for Hing; that much was his right—and hers. He would not slip away from the girl he loved. He would speak—and go.

While Hing was getting his "wake up tea," Tom wrote his cable— "Do you mind if I come home?"

CHAPTER XXX

THE old wall's carved girdle twisted and wound in a crinkled circumference of miles about the great home-place just as it had when he had paused here on the hill slope first, and looked down on the home of Yo Wing So—paying it little heed, because of a red butterfly evading him up in an alianthus tree. The great sprawling house with its gleaming, green-tiled roofs with tip-tilted carved eaves, its courtyards and lakes, its gardens and park-like acres, its stables and camel yards, its tiny rivers, its pretty mock-bridges, its bamboo forests, its thousands of flowers and its sun-walls, its tanks and pools of darting fish, splendid lilies and flower-rafts, its islands and water-wheels, its little cascades, its miniature hills and rocks; its great kitchen-garden where all that was both vegetable and toothsome grew that would grow in Shantung, and flowers-of-luck in blue and white pots stood among the gourds and rosy-pink radishes, the egg-plants and artichokes, to honor the honorable "good-to-eat-things" and to

make them bear in perfection and plenty; the little white temple, the farm-place with its yellowing millet and shogrum and corn and thatched peasant-huts; its vast, well-tended kennels where dogs of twenty breeds were homed, smiled up at the day as it had then. And to-day Drew looked and saw.

A good deal had happened to him, since he had stood here first. And if China itself meant little more to him than it did the day he had landed, this one bit of China did. It meant a personal experience and a Chinese girl.

And perhaps because he was going home, and knew and meant that he should not return to China again, he had looked more intently even at what he had passed as he'd come. The villages he'd passed through on their one street had seemed human habitations to him to-day, and the itinerant tradesmen, plying their trades at hut doors, or footing it, as he was, from village to village, he had regarded to-day with something of interest, and to some he had spoken. At one wayside shrine, making sure first that no one was near to see, he had left a gold coin—with a laugh; and if he had had a red silk handkerchief in his pocket he might even have rent it apart and tied a prayer on the "sacred" old gnarled *huai* tree that shaded the shrine. For he was saying good-by to China, and had a mind to do it cordially.

Walking swiftly, more in a bodily energy that tuned with a sharp mental determination than because he wished to arrive at Yo Wing So's at any particular moment, he had slackened his pace almost to a loitering each time he had come through a village. And in Shantung a walk of not many *li* may lead you through almost as many villages. Two or three thatched huts, a well and a temple not much bigger than a dog kennel

make many a Chinese village; more often than not with a long family pedigree, always with a high-sounding, intricate, fanciful name—"The Village of the Chow Family that Owns Blue Spotted Ducks"—"The Village of Musk Flowers on-the-Roofs"—"The Village of Li's Wife With Six Sons and Three Jade Bracelets"—many such a hamlet boasts only the three or four homes of mud and thatch; some of them even lack the stunted temple, and a few red rags on a bamboo pole is the place of municipal worship and prayer. But at least two dwelling houses and a well are indispensable to the make-up of a Chinese village.

How any of the constant stream of itinerant salesmen and tradesmen—let alone all of them—make a living from such sparse and poor clientèle only a Chinese mind can understand. But they must, for day after day, year after year, century after century, the thrifty stream trickles on: carpenters, tooth-drawers, incense-sellers, cobblers, hawkers of coats and pots, bean-curds, peanuts, charms, locust-broth, artificial flowers, fans, beeswax, oil, *soy,* cakes and gods; pushing their wares before them on cumbersome, one-wheel barrows, or carrying them slung from poles resting across their shoulders. And to-day the American had greeted most of them with, "Have you had your bath?"—to which they had replied gravely and pleasantly, "Have you had your bath?"—quite as sensible a wording of general salutations as an enquiry concerning a stranger's health to which you know he will reply with an identical, "How do you do?"—especially in a district where deliciously warm sulphur springs bubble up invitingly at not too far distances and in conveniently secluded spots —if that matters, which it does not in Shantung as

stringently as it would in New York or New Hampshire.

He had not seen Ya-ling since the morning after Osuro's death, when she had gone with her hand on Aline's arm into Lady Rutherford-Carmichael's bedroom. But he knew that Ya-ling had gone home three days after that, that Su was "out of danger," and that Yo Wing So still tarried in Shensi.

Walter had gone back to Tsi-nan Fu. K'ung Kuo-fan Drew neither had heard from nor seen. Giggles had blown in once or twice, but had had almost nothing to say, and had stayed so short a time that Tom had wondered why he had come at all—busy as Rutherford-Carmichael always was. Burton and Brown and Pilkington had not come back yet. Tom and Hing ruled at the chummery alone.

Walter Swift, before he left, had had almost as little to say about what had happened as Giggles himself had, but he had assured Tom that Aline's plan had worked. The two Chinese girls had only just been missed as Walter had arrived at Yo Wing So's gate. He had seen Mrs. Yo—he'd thought it best when he learned from O-i-pan that she already was seeking her daughters in the garden thickets and paths. And Mrs. Yo had consented good-naturedly that her daughters should stay with the English lady as long as she wished. Yo Wing So would command it, she was sure—and if Yo Z'in Tö noticed their absence and demurred, why she, Mrs. Yo, herself, would essay to placate and persuade the venerable dragon-one. Mrs. Yo's tone had implied that she rather hoped the grandmother would not miss either Ya-ling or Su, and that she had no complete confidence in being able to handle the jade-like old-one if the need arose. But if she failed, she'd send a runner and chairs

for the lord Tom Drew, and he would not have to ask Yo Z'in Tö beyond his one first word. And Mrs. Yo had given Swift a large and not unwelcome breakfast of pheasant and pancakes and melons and apricots and warmed wine, and had served it herself. She had entreated him to say how torn her heart was and crushed her ribs that she her degraded self could not have herself carried in her miserable chair to the palace place of the English prince, and with her two abominable daughters nurse and serve the moonlight radiant wife of the beautiful English prince. But it might cost her her life if she left Madame Yo Z'in Tö with no slave of her blood to come at her call. Her miserable life was of no value to any one, but her forced departure for the Yellow-Springs would plunge her family into many moons of mourning—a disaster it was her duty to avoid especially now when her august lord was bringing with him from Shensi the son he had adopted there, and it would be an ill omen if white funeral rites clouded and cursed the coming home and enthronement of the heir. But she would despatch without delay a "healing-basket" to the matchless foreign "no-account-one" who was ill, and she offered too to despatch with it her own medicine man, a holy mountain-recluse who knew everything and could do a miracle unless the god-of-Health forbade. And it warmed her inferior heart—the giggle with which she said it, proved her sincere—that the noble friend her husband loved condescended to eat twice of that quince-pilaf, for she herself had made it. Upon which statement Walter, not at all unwillingly had accepted a third helping of the pilaf of quince and mushrooms and frogs' legs and pistachio nuts; and they had parted the best of friends. And so had Tom Drew and

Walter Swift. The older American had looked at Tom a little wistfully, but had profferred no advice.

Aline had 'phoned, as she'd said she would. They'd pull the girl through, she and Ya-ling, she said, but the poor silly child was very ill. No; she had not sent for Dr. Gibson—he understood Chinese, and Su rambled a bit—so they'd had no medicine-man, white or yellow, and wouldn't unless the child grew even worse. Tom was not to come. She'd 'phone again if she wanted him to do anything.

What a splendid place it was and how Chinese! Tom realized it, as he had not before, as he stood there looking down from the hill-side. The homestead of Yo Wing So had every reason and certainly every right to look and to be Chinese but Drew resented that it did.

The garden was riper and richer than when he had seen it first. The glorious interlude between summer's dwindling and winter's gusty coming that only two lands have—the few warm, wine-like days that in Drew's land are called "Indian Summer"—had followed the crisp, cool weeks that had warned Shantung of bitter winter's cold and want, and flushed the old garden with shimmering beauty, and drenched it in sunshine warmth. The flowers of earlier moons were done, tucked away in sleep, but the lavish, more brilliant flowers of Chinese autumn were heavy and glorious with bloom. The white azalea that kept all illness from the Yos still lifted its snowy pointed cups near the spirit-wall. Birds still sang in the willows. The cat pulled on its chain, tiny dogs chased in the sun, and the peacocks spread their fans on the terrace. Tulips of every tint still bloomed (how, only Yo's gardeners knew)

among their gay blade-shaped beryl leaves as if it were June. Roses—the envy of every other garden in the province, for cultivated garden roses are not many in Shantung—were still full of blossoms and buds. Wistaria and yellow columbines, snap-dragons and magnolias, mignonette, and sturdy carnations were everywhere, and the peonies were most of all. Musk has lost its scent in Europe, but it still scented the garden of Yo Wing So. Inside and out the great wall was draped with patches of vines in bloom. And late peaches and plums, gages and pears were russet and red, lemon and jade on the sun-walls. The nut-trees bent with their wealth, not all the cherries had been gathered, iris and orchids, fairy-flowers and gauze-poppies danced in the sun, primroses ox-blood red and bronze laid deep mats of velvet on the grass, lotus in the tanks were blue and rose, crimson and cream, wine and a dozen yellows, from a green-tinged lemon to an orange that was almost the russet of November leaves; melons were bursting their girths with spicy sweetness. Su's tame pigeons were circling away—the tiny instruments fastened under their tails whistling music as they flew; each knew its name, and each would fly cooing home at sunset. Golden-rod and pampas grass feathered the ferns. Ivy cluttered and blanketed the tree trunks. Violets still bloomed, as they would under the snow—delicate, fragrant violets as winter-fearless as they were shy, and as sturdy as the peasants of Shantung. Canary-creeper and trumpet-flowers held tight to a humped, red-lacquered bridge's carved sides, and calceolarias of many colors and some with bag-like flowers larger than a big man's clenched fist, hardy tiger-lilies, fairy-frail pale pink ones, heliotrope and verbenas, and Kwan Yin-

ko's own flowers—called "bleeding-hearts" in New England and "dicentras" in old England—were almost as many as the peonies. In a far place, not to be seen from Madame Yo's windows or balcony, and where she was not apt to go—for a tree there was a demon-tree and was haunted—thousands of bunches of grapes hung blue, purple, pale amber and green-white. The demon-tree was an affliction, and even more an indignity than a menace; and Madame Yo avoided it, not because she feared its ghostly habitant—Yo Z'in Tö feared nothing, or said so—but because it angered her that an evil thing had dared select the Yos' domain to reside in; but to destroy the old twisted giant oak by fire or axe would be but to have it replaced by three, and the hens would drop shell-less, bitter eggs, nightingales forsake the garden and the camels would writhe and bellow with colic; so they made obeisance instead, had builded a shrine to the oak-tree's demon in its shade, and fed its roots with fish bones and garlic-water; and it throve as it had for three hundred years, and left them alone. To grow grapes in most provinces in China (and Shantung is one) is rash, if not insane; a defiance almost sure to enrage the evil ones of the underground who think themselves mocked, and anger the gods above; because grape bunches point down to the hidden darkness, instead of gratefully up to the gods on high in gratitude for the lanterns they hang out there—the great yellow day-star and the burnished night-moon—to signal "All's well On High and China's gods guard her." But the father of Yo Wing So had tasted grapes at an ambassador's table in Pekin and had fallen. Yo C'hein Fô had been something of a gourmet, and a very brave man. He had defied the gods of the underworld, and

had imported and planted grape-vines. In public he said that "baby-tales" were silly lies. Did not the imperial wistaria's bunched flowers point down, laburnum —imperial yellow laburnum—the lychees, cucumbers, gourds, snow-balls, the orange-trees' balls of gold; half that the gods gave to comfort the eyes and stomachs of men? In private he burned many costly sticks of incense, and made great gifts to the Temple in K'üfu, where the Hell-god, the implacable ruler of the Underworld, sits in awful state, his dread monsters standing near him, a human-soul kneeling before him for judgment while his animal-headed servants wait on either side to carry out his decree of punishment, or to bid the kneeling one begone to the kindlier judgment of On-High.

As before, the place was full of life and industry, but so vast was it that it showed more of human absence than of human movement. Here and there servants were at their outdoor work or errands, but from this height, they were merely dots of periwinkle blue, and black-clad specks. Drew barely caught the far-off blurred glimmer of water in the duckery, and could not see at all the hundreds of ducks that he knew were on it. Tom knew the duck-yard well, as he did almost every part of the great sprawling place—house and gardens. Mrs. Yo was proud of her housewifery; she had, giggling complacently, herself taken Tom to the duckery, to the piggeries and through the kitchens and storerooms. And when he had, in answer to her direct questions, confessed that his honorable mother had neither ducks nor pigs on Fifth Avenue, and that his entire family owned but one lap-dog, the little Chinese matron had shrieked out her commiseration for the

calamities of his jade-like mother. Perhaps Yo Wing So was quietly house-proud—he had explained almost every room down there to Drew, and shown them and their courtyards to him. Of the great garden there was little that Drew and Ya-ling had not explored, and lingered in, together.

Yo Ya-ling was down there in it somewhere now, he thought. She liked the garden better than she did the house-rooms and inner courtyards. When he came, not at rice-time, he was almost sure to find Ya-ling in the outer garden, working flowers on the stuff held in her embroidery-frame, touching music from her table-lute, reading or talking to the flowers or the birds in their bamboo and ivory cages, talking gravely to a rompish gang of sleeve-dogs or speaking severely to the strutting, greedy peacocks.

He hoped he'd find her in the garden now. Without knowing or suspecting it the New Yorker loved that old, twisting Chinese garden. In the house itself, even in the inner courtyards, China always clutched him and estranged him—sometimes slightly, lightly; sometimes sharply and heavily—forbiddingly, almost with a menace; or a little jeeringly and jarringly. China—whenever he realized China, let or had to let it reach and find him—jarred on Tom Drew; and the closer, warmer their friendliness had grown—his and Ya-ling's—the more had China jarred and rasped him. He could not understand Walter Swift, or the many Englishmen, big men and vital, some of them, who spent most of their lives in China, and liked it—wrote long books about it! He hated the thought that Ya-ling was Chinese. It did not occur to him, now at least, to wonder if perhaps she did not hate the thought that he was not Chinese. He felt

it hard lines on Ya-ling that she was Chinese—and hard lines on him; and injustice to them both. He did not realize, nothing could make him realize that she was she because, and only because, she *was* Chinese.

He hoped he might find Ya-ling in the garden.

Three things grow in China—and nowhere else—that are extremely rare there, and very precious; the crystal tree that grows nowhere but in the soil that canopies the long sleep of the Great Sage, the gold-tree with its foliage of living metal, and the *shen-yin* tree. If the crystal tree is the holiest and the gold-tree rarest, the *shen-yin* tree is incomparably the most beautiful. *And it sings.* Tall and slender with a burnished trunk that gleams like polished gold by day, and gleams white-silver in the moonlight, its delicate leaves are never still; they whisper when the air is stillest, when wind touches them they answer it in music—music clearer, sweeter, more distinctly noted than the music of the "singing sands." Its notes are something harp-like, a little flute-like, like the sound of bells in time, fairy bells strangely beautiful, infinitely sweet. In Ho-nan they call it "the Treasure Tree," in Pechilli "the Elves' Song," in Sz Ch'wan "the Harp Tree," in Shantung "Bells-of-Love Tree." There are three *shen-yins* in Pechilli, two in Sz Ch'wan, four in Ho-nan, one in Shantung; and, it is said, only these in all China.

Yo Ya-ling was sitting on the stone bench beneath the *shen-yin* tree which was, of its many, Yo Wing So's garden's greatest treasure, so swathed in her own thoughts that she did not hear him as Drew came to her through the blood-red hibiscus and the lemon oleanders.

He had come to comfort her, before he told his story

—their story—if he told it to-day. He could not measure, much less realize what she had suffered because of Yo Su. He knew that she held her sister's fault sin and shame of all their family, smirching an almost endless ancestry, degrading all its posterity to come; but he knew it without understanding or grasping, and he had sympathized and grieved with her for a personal grief, a girl's transient sorrow and mortification. And for that, *her* grief, her personal disillusion, a nice girl's pain at a sister's side-slip, he had come to comfort and to share. He had foreseen that he must find her broken and distressed, dejected, and perhaps a little dishevelled. He had almost been prepared to see, instead of the gay daintiness that always garmented and garnished her young slimness, her wearing something approximating the shapeless hempen sackcloth of Chinese mourning and penance. And, too, he had counted on finding her sorrowed at their parting. He had sent her no word of it and no other's word of it could have reached her, for he had spoken of it to no one. But he had come to expect Yo Ya-ling to anticipate his thoughts and moods, and always to share them—so constantly had she done so; a peculiar, exquisite, not ungeneral, Chinese receptivity, psychic, fine-spun—call it what you like—which he had thought a personal responsiveness of hers and hers alone; a response to himself, and so warm and vital that it was anticipatory as well as unfailing; a heart-chord that bound her to him.

Yo Ya-ling was doing nothing. She seemed too full of happiness for any form of action—embroidery-frame, verse-book, table-lute—to be worthy her fingers. Happiness tinkled and rippled from her, as its faint sweet

music did from the *shen-yin* tree; satisfaction flamed about her as their gorgeous beauty flamed the peonies and the ruby-dripping hibiscus. Her little amber hands lay idle on the deep orange of her silky crêpe tunic whose delicate embroideries of hyacinth and jade gleamed like soft jeweling. Her stick-pins flashed—and well they might, dangling emeralds, ruby-studded. Her orange draperies showed coquettishly their turquoise silk lining. Her little padded shoes were the shoes of a Chinese woman.

Drew loved her, but he angered a little to see her so insouciant and radiant, so care-free, yes, and triumphant, when he had come to tell her that he was going home, to his own home half the globe away, before long now. She must have known that he was, for it always had been understood between them; more than once she had spoken of it. Was it nothing to her that he was going? Did not the thought of it widow her, dull the flowers, empty the garden?

It startled him to see Yo Ya-ling so. And, because it was a man's, his heart was resentful.

It was not the picture she made—she and the Bells of-Love Tree and the riotous beauty of the flowers—that had startled him. He had lived in China too long now, had come too often to her garden, for any picture of color and flowing lines, of pulsing nature and of Chinese girlhood to startle Tom Drew ever again. It was her radiant happiness that startled and hurt him—and too, perhaps, her utter Chineseness. He hated those padded, queer-shaped, queer-soled, embroidered, silk Chinese shoes!

CHAPTER XXXI

DREW went no nearer. He stood and waited; feeling farther from Ya-ling than he ever had before; wanting her as even in his self-battle the other morning he had not suspected that he could want any woman.

He would go no nearer, he would not speak to her—until she saw him, and gave some sign. And he knew that what he had come to do, if he could, would be harder, wrench more, than he had known; wondered if he could do it?

Presently—sooner than it had seemed to the man who watched and loved her—Yo Ya-ling tilted back her jeweled head, to lift her smiling face closer to the streaming sunshine, and saw him. She gave a gurgled cry of welcome, sprang up, and ran to him with an abandon he had not seen in her before, or suspected she could feel or show.

Ya-ling held out both her hands to him, caught his almost before he could give them.

She seemed a new Yo Ya-ling to him as she did it. She had clung to him at the chummery when he had led her in from the storm, had left her hand in his while she sat, shaken and stunned in his chair, and told, half sobbed, her story and pleaded her need. She had taken him by his hand and led him from the hedge to Osuro's window. She had shaken hands with him once or twice "English fashion." She had clung to him in the chummery half in exhaustion, half in fear, wholly in her weakness' need of his strength. At Osuro's she had led him in command and in precaution. She had shaken hands with him—once or twice—in courteous

Chinese concession to a "white" convention she disliked even more than she disapproved of it. Almost always a Chinese hand, when conceded, lies a little limp in a Western hand, instinctively loath to clasp what it feels an impertinence or, at best, ill taste, social cheapness, if not social coarseness. This was very different touching of him: sheer childish glee; an exquisite hoydenishness of bubbling happiness that no more need hold back its gay clamor from the hand of a dear friend than it need from the peonies and wistaria, or from the baby faces of the red anemones that laughed up at her from among the maiden-hair and musk that jostled them softly.

"Ya-ling was waiting for our friend," she cried. "Come sit with her. We will drink the sunshine and listen to the Love Bells. I dance with happiness. The garden sings with happiness. We will sing with it. Almost my happiness hurts me. I am mad with happiness, our dear Tom Drew. The beautiful happiness! The celestial bounty of Kwan Yin our Mother! Happiness is Yo Ya-ling's playmate this day of fragrance. They romp together! They love! Come romp with us, Tom Drew!"

She scampered back to the old stone bench, laughing softly as she ran. Drew followed her more slowly.

"You do not know? You have not heard it?" She patted the bench beside her in friendliest invitation as she questioned him.

"No," Drew said as he sat down. He had no idea what Ya-ling was talking about. He knew that Su was getting well; he knew that nothing had leaked out—that, in all chance, Yo Wing So need never know. But, whatever it was, this was more than that. And he had picked up at least enough about China to know that a

blight smirched Yo Su that always would, and that while they lived must touch her sister heavily, scaringly, in the Chinese estimation of Yo Ya-ling. And he had believed that nothing could lift or cleanse it; and he had wondered what poor little Su's after life could be in this relentless China of hers—and of Ya-ling's. He certainly had no idea what it was that Ya-ling was talking about, what could have so flooded her with joy, so delighted her, that she seemed to have forgotten a not shameless tragedy and Yo Su's peril and sorrow.

Yo Ya-ling clapped her hands softly.

"Then it is mine to tell you. Oh, it needed but that. He could not tell you, until the *mei-jên* come back from my noble father; but I thought that he might have whispered just the perfumed radiant edge of it to you, his friend, and that you must have guessed it all then in your thought; I thought he might have whispered a word to you, for I know that K'ung Kuo-fan loves you, Tom Drew. Listen—listen then to Yo Ya-ling while she speaks the jeweled words. K'ung Kuo-fan has sent the *mei-jên* to my father where he tarries still in Shensi!" Ya-ling pressed her hands to her throat, over her little high collar, as if to still the joy that beat and fluttered there like a prisoned bird against its cage-bars, and Drew saw that her dancing eyes were soft too with tears.

But his eyes grew stern with horror, and his face set hard. He knew that K'ung could have sent a match-maker, a Chinese "go-between" to Yo Wing So on but one errand; to ask the hand of a daughter. He had thought better of K'ung than that! He had liked K'ung Kuo-fan; and had thought him a man. On the houseboat K'ung had loved poor little Su, if ever Drew

had seen a man that loved. Of course K'ung would have none of Su now—and he did not blame K'ung for that; no man could—a Chinese girl who had been in love with a Japanese adventurer—probably was now; for Drew had heard what her cry of "Toru" had told; and even treating a girl as Osuro had treated Yo Su did not always kill a woman's love—not some girls! He had not misunderstood K'ung's chivalry in saying that Yo Su had done no wrong; it had been the fellow's manliness and good-breeding, his fine loyalty to Yo Wing So. But to swing round so sharp and soon—not to let his love that had died grow cold in its grave—before asking for Su's own sister in marriage! And Yo Ya-ling was happy and glad that he had—there was no mistaking that. Yo would consent, of course. K'ung was "top notch" in Shantung, and Yo admired and liked him. And they would marry Ya-ling to a Chinese! That thought sickened him.

"It seems a great sacrifice that he makes to you," the girl said softly. "It does to me. But not to the noble K'ung Kuo-fan. And, Tom Drew, he has been god-like about it. And it is not for me, a Yo, to nurse in my heart a sore thing that a K'ung, the jade-like descendant of our Great Sage, has wiped away. What my misery was, and my fear, only Kwan our Mother of Mercy ever can know, when I saw that Yo Su would live, that my prayers she might go to the Yellow Springs were refused. I feared she had not the courage, our broken lily-one to hang or poison herself—terrible as that would have been for our house; and to think of her as a nun—the convent life is hard for those to whom it does not call! Only Kwan Yin knows what my pain, my despair! Then he came to me, the unmatched-among-

all-men, K'ung Kuo-fan, and told me of his love; what it offered, what it craved."

"Spoke to *you*, before your father had given his consent!" Drew muttered bitterly.

"It was wrong of course. But new ways are forced upon us now. And it is not for us to see a flaw in the K'ung. He chose not to take the risk of doing what would hurt or displease Yo Su, and to her, of course, he could not speak or approach,—so—"

"What the devil has Su to do with it now?" Drew broke in.

"No thing, of course. It is for my noble father to decide. But K'ung dared to break our law, in his tenderness for the wish of Yo Su."

"Damned considerate!" Drew muttered to himself.

"So, he came to me, at the English lady's—oh, she had been a mother-friend to us, that yellow-haired one! When I bear a girl, I will ask my lord that he let me give her her name—A-Leen."

"My God!" That was too much.

But Ya-ling went joyously on. "He tell me all in his great heart, and he ask me will I go to my sister and learn for a sureness if she liked not to be his wife."

"Hello!" Drew whispered hoarsely, and breathed a long breath. The color came slowly back to his face. And for a moment or two he did not hear what Yo Ya-ling was saying.

"Tom Drew," was the next he caught, "are your ears sealed up with wax of bees and camphor-oil like jars of olives put for winter away? Is your tongue gone to the Temple of Silence? Say you are gladdened! Say you too worship the pure-one K'ung Kuo-fan! Oh,

the heart of Yo Wing So will sing as mine does when K'ung Kuo-fan's *mei-jên* petitions him in Shensi. The heart of the grandmother will make again music in the courtyard. We must make that she understand the joy that has come to our house; know that our flower-one will be a K'ung, a descendant of the Superior Man. See, she is there now at the telescope!''

Through the vistas of bamboo and hibiscus they could see Yo Z'in Tö, her women behind her in attendance, sitting on the thick-napped Mongol carpet always spread beside the instrument when Z'in Tö tottered up the steps cut in the wall's inner side, sometimes to peer till her old eyes failed through the telescope at the road Ki had gone, the road he'd come home; sometimes to sit on her carpet and cushions listless and silent. The years that were gone clamored at her heart, and her brave old heart was almost spent. Winter had come upon Yo Z'in Tö sooner than it had to Shantung. She, too, had her days of Indian Summer, when she ruled as imperatively as ever, knew and called them by name, and they bent before her and scurried away to do her bidding. But they no longer feared her stick; it had grown too heavy for the hand of the grandmother, and the willow wand she carried instead hurt not even a sleeve-dog—and her grasp was very feeble. And her days of Indian Summer were brief and few, and paler and chillier than the glowing, garden's wine-warm Indian Summer. The old woman still kept her liking for Drew, and there had been days when she'd thought him Yo Ki come home to her, and had bade him sharply to wear no more those degrading garments of the heathen land he'd come home from—terrible garments that showed

his legs like a girl's! Yo Z'in Tö was failing; and all her people gave her an added tendance, a new reverence and tenderness.

"You have taken my breath away, Ya-ling, that's all. But look here, what does Yo Su say to it, what does she feel about it? Tell me that, and I'll tell you how glad I am, or can't be. Is she willing?"

"Yes, the flower-one is willing and glad," Ya-ling answered with a sigh of deep content.

"Are you sure?"

"I am sure, Tom Drew. The flower-one is radiant now, perfumed and lovely again with gratitude to K'ung Kuo-fan."

"She can't love him—so soon." The American man had little faith in gratitude as the bedrock of married happiness. And he had not forgotten the other night, although Ya-ling assumed to.

"Love? Before the marriage day! How could that be—even in this strange, new-behaving China of ours?"

"K'ung Kuo-fan seems to have managed it—love before marriage."

"Kuo-fan is a man, and a K'ung. Law does not bind him as prisoner. But a girl—and a sash-wearer girl—has not his liberty or judgment. No; Yo Su does not love K'ung Kuo-fan. But she is grateful to him. She will not shrink more than a bride should when K'ung lifts her red veil. And when she has borne him a son, K'ung Yo Su will worship her lord."

The Bells-of-Love tree quivered in a soft breeze that came to it across the mignonette and tube-roses, and its soft tinkled notes were very clear.

If Drew was listening to the tinkled singing the old tree's crisp leaves made, his listening was moody.

Ya-ling understood.

"You think of what was. Oh—it has gone. This time we speak, and then we forget. I should have guarded our little flower-one better. I suspected the *amah*, but I suspected not the rest—not till the last day when it was flung at me, and I took Nee Lay Pin by her throat, and squeezed out of her the truth. The dwarf bewitched our flower-one, made her believe that in listening to him she was doing a great service to come to our honorable father. What she gave of affection—a something that was not, because it was made of a lie—to an unworthy has gone. It went before she fell in the faint. She remembers it with horror as a nightmare. In the courtyard of K'ung Kuo-fan it will haunt her no more."

"Will it never haunt him?" Drew asked slowly. And he added impulsively, "Will he never remind her of it—when things go wrong?"

Yo Ya-ling's eyes widened. "K'ung Kuo-fan is a gentleman," she answered quietly. "Things—as you say it—do not go wrong in a K'ung *tso ma lou*," she added more kindly.

A bullfinch in its cage on a great oleander began to sing in ecstasy and the growing breeze churned up a bouquet of sweet odors from a thousand flowers. And the "Bells-of-Love" answered the finch and the flowers.

How lovely the garden was! How lovelier, sweeter Yo Ya-ling!

"Not love before marriage!" Drew turned on her almost roughly. "That is nonsense, Ya-ling. We know better, you and I. Do you not love me, Ya-ling?"

Yo Ya-ling grew very still. Her eyes danced no more. The rose-petal flush paled on her face. She

smiled at Drew gently and sadly, but her smile's sweetness was more than its sadness.

"You know that I love you!" the man cried.

"We have dreamed it here in the garden," she told him gravely. "We should not find it to be in the *Ko'tang*—not in my country or in your country."

"We'd always find it everywhere," he contradicted her hotly. "Wherever we were; we could not escape from it, you and I."

"It would escape from us," Ya-ling said gently.

"I don't believe it!"

Yo Ya-ling studied, or seemed to, a fern clump growing at her feet. Then she faced him gravely. "Have you come to me your own *mei-jên*, as is the custom of your country? Is it our marriage that you seek?"

Drew's face twisted before it stiffened; and Yo Ya-ling pitied him for the misery she saw in his eyes.

But he did not flinch from her question.

"No," though the word choked him, he spoke it clearly. Tom Drew was manly, and Chinese Ya-ling loved him for it.

"And I would not have it," she told him with a little sorrowful laugh. "What you have given me, I have too given to you—"

A man's eyes leapt to her, and his knuckles showed white through the brown hands he clenched. She saw how he trembled.

"But we would not do to each other an injury."

"Must it be an injury, Ya-ling?" Drew whispered hoarsely.

"It could be no other. Love is not a greatness but a peasant smallness—a mean thing—love that does not keep the law."

"Oh—Ya-ling," the man pleaded, "what are we going to do about it?"

"Remember it—remember it as long as we live, I think."

"Only that?"

"Only that."

The sound he answered her sounded like a smothered sob; it was not a word.

"I shall think of you—of course. You will think of me sometimes—"

"My God!"

"But I will not let myself think of you too much—or with cruel longing. If that threatens, I will control it. I am sure that it is as wrong and as weak to let thought master us as it is to let wine or opium or *fan-tan* or any vice. I will never let love become a vice."

"Our people—yours and mine—if they would consent," Drew began, for her dearness and her nearness threatened to master him.

"My father would give me to you, Tom Drew. No Yo will deny you anything—except only me, Yo Ya-ling. Your father, would he consent?"

"He would not like it."

"And we would not like it," the Chinese girl told him. "You would tire in a life that was empty, not a man's life, loitering in a garden, tied to a Chinese girl's girdle. It would shame us both, and our children would be held unfortunates by my countrymen and by their father's. Would you take me to your country, where I could find no welcome, know no home? China offends you—I have seen it often. England offended me. I like to think that your own country would offend me not so much. But it would offend me. It was cruel to

Yo Ki, a boy far from his home who had offended it in nothing except in having been born Chinese. It would give me less welcome than it gave my brother, who had come there to trespass but for a small time. It would be less kind to a Chinese woman who had dared to become the wife of its countryman. There is nothing for us, but a little perfumed memory and a duty that is clear. Where duty is clear there need be no long unhappiness."

"I don't believe I can do it!" Drew cried out miserably.

"Yes—you will do it—go back to your own people, and leave me in our garden. You have nothing more for me than you have given—for a time. I have nothing more for you than I have given. There is no one-path for us. You do not know my language but as a difficult obscurity, often meaningless, never very clear; nor I know yours but badly as a half-learned lesson tasked me at school. You do not accept our customs. I could not yours. And it has a barrier greater than all the others: I have no doubt that my race is superior to your race; I look down upon your people; you believe that your race is superior to my race; you look down on the Chinese. That parts us—for the ever. It is time you go to your own home."

"I came to tell you that I was going," Tom said ruefully, "to tell you that, and that I loved you. I said to myself the other day a good deal of what you've just been saying, Ya-ling. It was a tussle. But—oh, well, I sized it up pretty much as you have. So I sent off a cable to my father. Here's his cable back."

When he laid the cable slip open on her lap Yo Ya-ling read it slowly.

"'Come home boy, calf being fattened. Pink ice-cream ordered. Cable boat. Might meet it.' Ah! the honorable father he will make you a feast of ceremony. And you will go to him without the delay."

"I suppose so," Drew said drearily. "In a few days —perhaps."

"Start to your home now. Your father call you—and I—I wish it."

Yo Ya-ling's voice wavered a little on those last words and Tom Drew very nearly caught her in his arms and crushed her to him. All his being bade it, and bade him damn all the world and its fictions on her lips. She saw his impulse—saw him control it; and, not glad that it had been given her to love one of a foreign race, yet she was glad that her love had been given to a man.

"I cannot go just at once, dear," Drew told her, when he could speak. "I must come back to-morrow. I'm not up to it to-day—this has been enough for one pull, Ya-ling. I'll come to-morrow to say good-by to your mother and to the grandmother. And the next day must be ours—one day more all ours. Hing shall pack to-morrow or make a bonfire, whichever he likes, and I'll come and try to thank Mrs. Yo—I'll not forget their kindness ever—and to say good-by to the grandmother. I could not go without telling them good-by, could I? And the last day must be ours—yours and mine."

"You would not make it harder for me?" Ya-ling asked gently.

"Is it hard for you, Ya-ling?"

"It is very hard," she answered.

Drew turned away sharply. When he looked back,

he said, "Tell me just what you wish; I will do it."

"I will come with you a little—to the gate. The mother is praying in the temple that my father make his return safe. She will understand when I tell her that your honorable father had called you, and that you left for her all words of ceremony and of friendship. Yo Wing So when he returns to us from Shensi will rejoice for your father and for you that you have gone to your home in your own country. The most dear Old One will not know that you have not bowed before her. Her memory is all of far things now. Her childhood comes again. See—she is sleeping—lying there on her cushions; and her slave-girls have laid the quilts to cover her. I have a sake-keep—you call it—for you to carry across the four seas. I knew that you would come to-day—often I have known that you were coming—and I brought the sake-keep to the garden with me. It is two of them—one because Yo Ya-ling wishes you to have it; one because it is your wish to have it."

Ya-ling knelt down beside the bench and drew from under it something veiled in her scarf. She took from her pouch dangling at her sash something so tiny that her tiny yellow palm hid it. "Now," she demanded with both her hands behind her, "which will you have, Tom Drew?"

"Both!" Tom told her.

Ya-ling laughed softly, and laid what her left hand held—the left is the side of honor in China—on the bench beside him. And when Drew unfolded its envelope of silk paper he saw lying in it a leaf of the crystal tree—and remembered. He did not thank her, but he took out the little flat case he always carried, Yo Ya-ling had seen it often, and what it held. Drew

opened it, and shut the leaf in with his mother's picture. Perhaps that thanked her.

Ya-ling drew her other hand from behind her, and showed him what it held—a little cage of gauze, and in the cage a Cherry Jewel.

"I will carry it for you to the gate," she said, as she rose, and he rose too, and stood beside her. "Yesterday I found it, here in the *shen-yin* tree. It is very late for a butterfly to live. In this moon I have not seen one before. It was not hard to catch. I think the torpor that gives them sleep before the snow feathers come had drowsed it. But see, it still lives."

And this time his eyes thanked her.

"When did you know that I loved you?" Drew whispered—as they stood there, lingering for a moment by the *shen-yin*.

"Before you did," Ya-ling told him.

"When did you know that you loved me?" the man demanded.

But Yo Ya-ling would not answer.

It was a long way across the garden to the gate but they did not speak as they went together.

Before they came to the gate-keeper's hut Yo Ya-ling paused behind the jube-jube trees that screened them.

"Good-by, Tom," the girl said steadily.

Drew took the little gauze cage from her then. Smiling down at Yo Ya-ling he tore the gauze gently apart, and shook it softly. The filmy Cherry Jewel floated away lazily across the garden.

"I will not take it from China. There is only one thing in all China that I want for my own now, Ya-ling. I have caught my last butterfly, little woman. You did not like it, and I will not harm any butterfly again."

"Good-by," the girl repeated—not quite so steadily.

For a moment—his blood was pounding madly, and he was a man—he almost yielded to his impulse and his need, almost took her in his arms to hold her once, his for a moment, before he left her. But he would not. She should keep her girlish Chinese state untouched by him.

But he caught her eyes with his and held them. And they stood and looked so long, tremulous but brave; the man and woman who loved and longed.

Then Drew turned away and went quickly to the gate.

Yo Ya-ling would not let a tear come till she had seen the gate close again and heard O-i-pan rebolt it. Then she hid her face in her sleeve, and found her way so, slowly, to a stone seat beneath a *mang-tao* tree.

Drew did not look back—not even from the hillside.

The day was turning colder, he thought. The cotton's white balls still hung in their bursted sheaths, here and there, but a flock of wild geese cried out in anger, flying towards the South, taking their flight farther south than the changing mouth of China's Sorrow. Up on the mountains a snowflake drifted down on to a gentian, and melted in its blue bosom into a tear.

Drew could not have seen the old wall now, if he had looked back—for he had come too far.

But he heard a sound that chilled him—a sound in the distance. It was not thunder, he thought, though it had a roll of thunder in it, and the yellow Day Star still burned brightly.

It was a bleating brazen sound of human sorrow that had reached him as he went; a gong struck in sudden anguish, and the death drums of the Yos.

Yo Z'in Tö had gone to Yo Ki as she slept; her frenzied women tore their garments as they ran wailing to rouse the great house, and on to the temple where Mrs. Yo—supreme in the "flowery" courtyard now—was praying before the tablets, with the incense sticks she had lighted burning in their costly jeweled holders.

And Yo Ya-ling was sobbing with her face hidden in her sleeve.

In mid-ocean Tom Drew heard a table-lute—as clearly as he had heard it in the garden. Some one was playing on it softly, sweetly—"Yan-Kee Dude-Lee."

THE END